



THE ADVENTURES OF BLAKE & MORTIMER

Based on the characters of EDGAR P. JACOBS

THE SARCOPHAGI OF THE SIXTH CONTINENT

Yves Sente

Part 1

André Juillard



THE SARCOPHAGI OF THE SIXTH CONTINENT

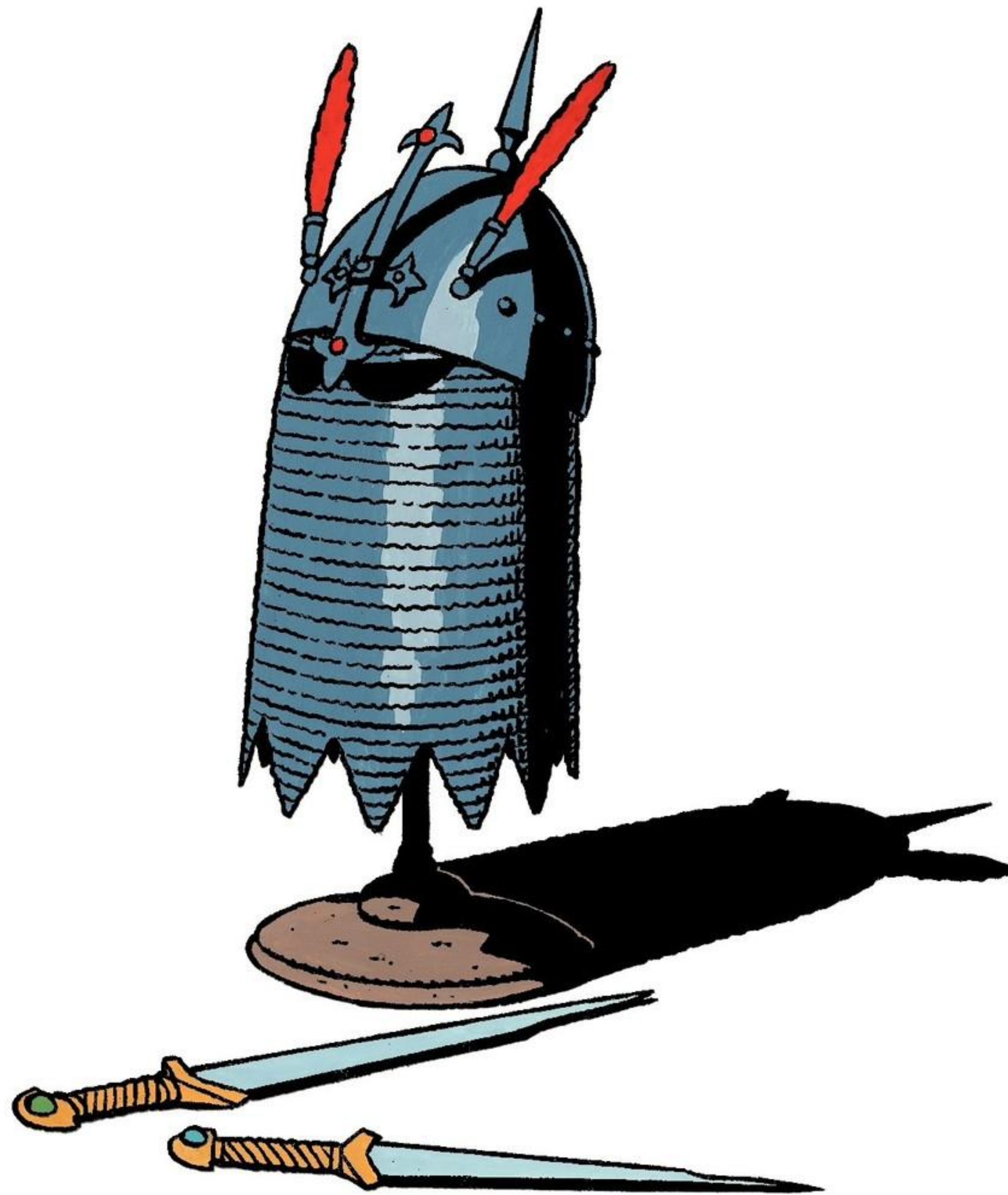
PART 1

THE GLOBAL THREAT

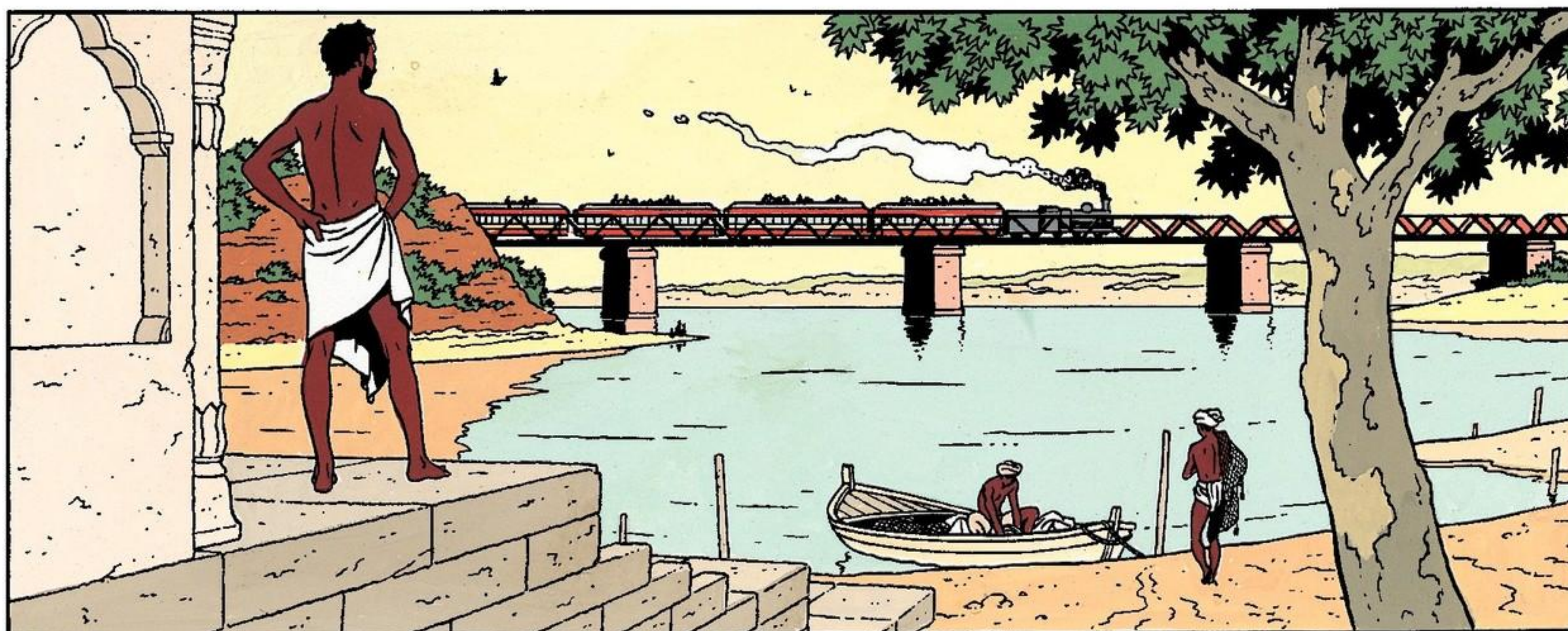
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Drawing: André Juillard

Colour work: Madeleine DeMille



Based on the characters of
EDGAR P. JACOBS



Original title: Les sarcophages du 6ème continent tome 1

Original edition: © Editions Blake & Mortimer / Studio Jacobs (Dargaud – Lombard S.A.) 2003
by André Juillard & Yves Sente
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English translation: © 2010 Cinebook Ltd

Translator: Jerome Saincantin
Lettering and text layout: Imadjinn
Printed in Spain by Just Colour Graphic

This edition first published in Great Britain in 2011 by
Cinebook Ltd
56 Beech Avenue
Canterbury, Kent
CT4 7TA
www.cinebook.com

A CIP catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-84918-067-2



FEBRUARY 1958. SIMLA, THE FORMER SUMMER CAPITAL OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH INDIA, STANDS WITNESS TO A COLONIAL PAST THAT ITS INHABITANTS ARE STILL TRYING TO FORGET. IT SEEMS TO REAR UP ON THE FOOTHILLS OF THE HIMALAYAS, AS IF BETTER TO DEFEY THE NEW SNOWS THAT ASSAIL IT.



THAT EVENING, AN UNUSUAL HUSTLE AND BUSTLE REIGNS AROUND THE FORMER VICEROY'S PALACE...



... THAT ISN'T ESCAPING NOTICE DESPITE THE LATE HOUR.

Do you see this, Lieutenant? Half of India's Maharajas must be gathered here!?



Our intelligence agents were not mistaken... This gathering is quite ominous. It's urgent we go have a look at what's happening behind these walls!

I'm ready, Lieutenant. Trust me: I'll bring back all the information you need.

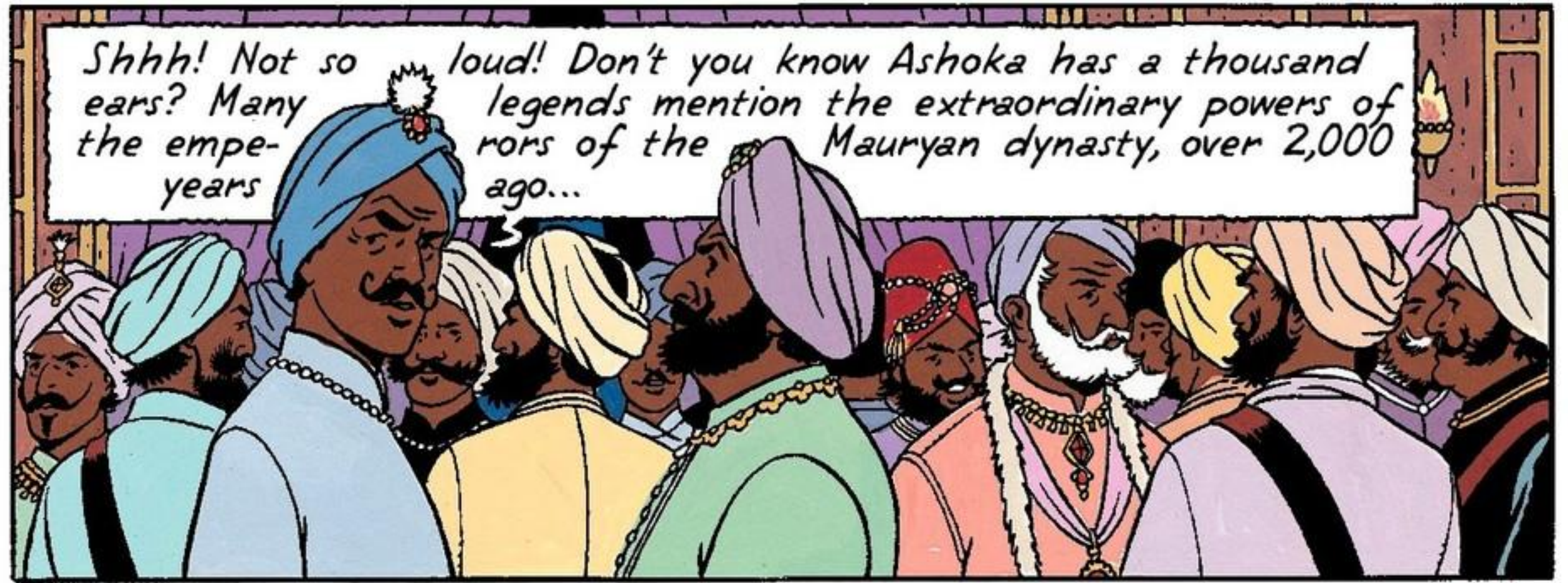


You can go, my boy. But do be careful...

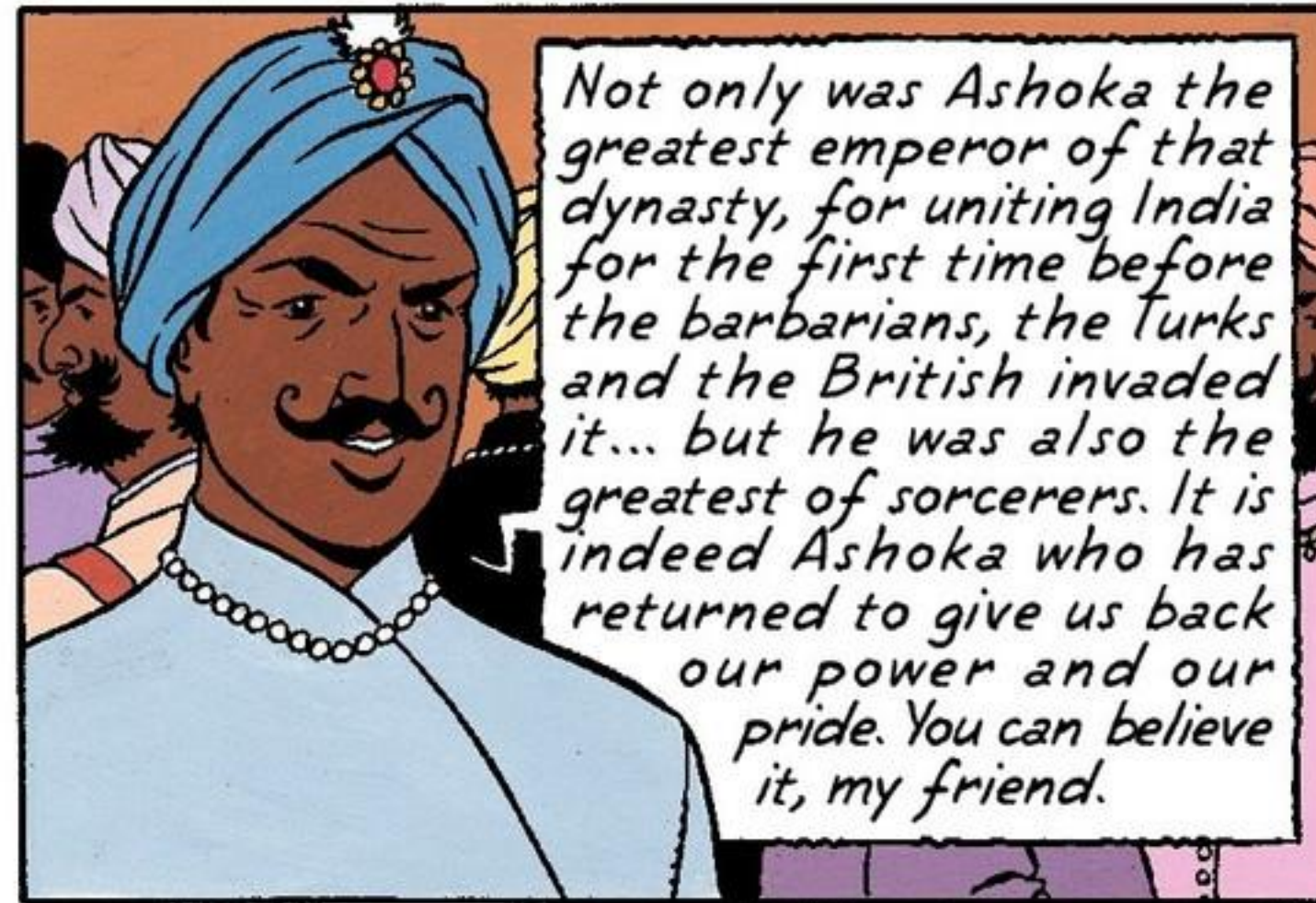




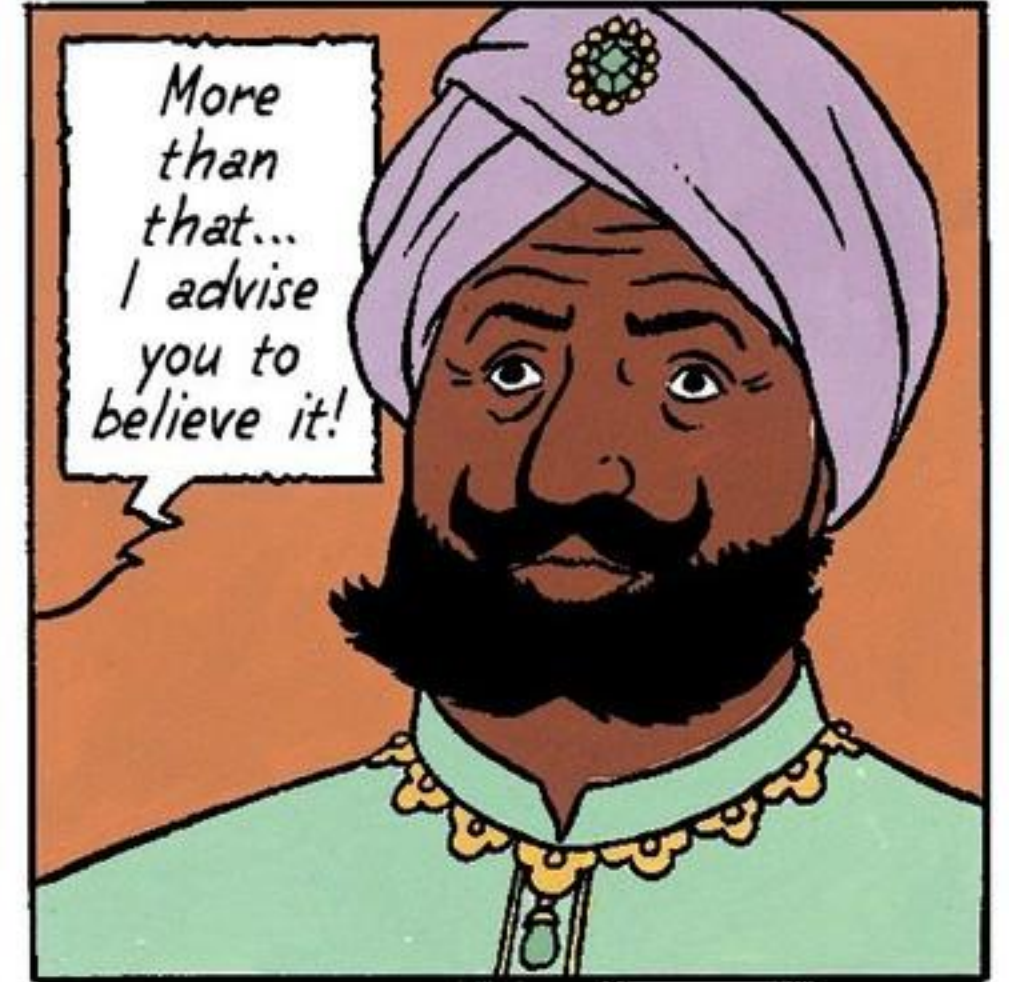
This atmosphere is very exciting. Tell me, you who have met him before: Do you really think this Ashoka is who he pretends to be? It seems so incredible!



Shhh! Not so loud! Don't you know Ashoka has a thousand legends mention the extraordinary powers of the emperors of the Mauryan dynasty, over 2,000 years ago...



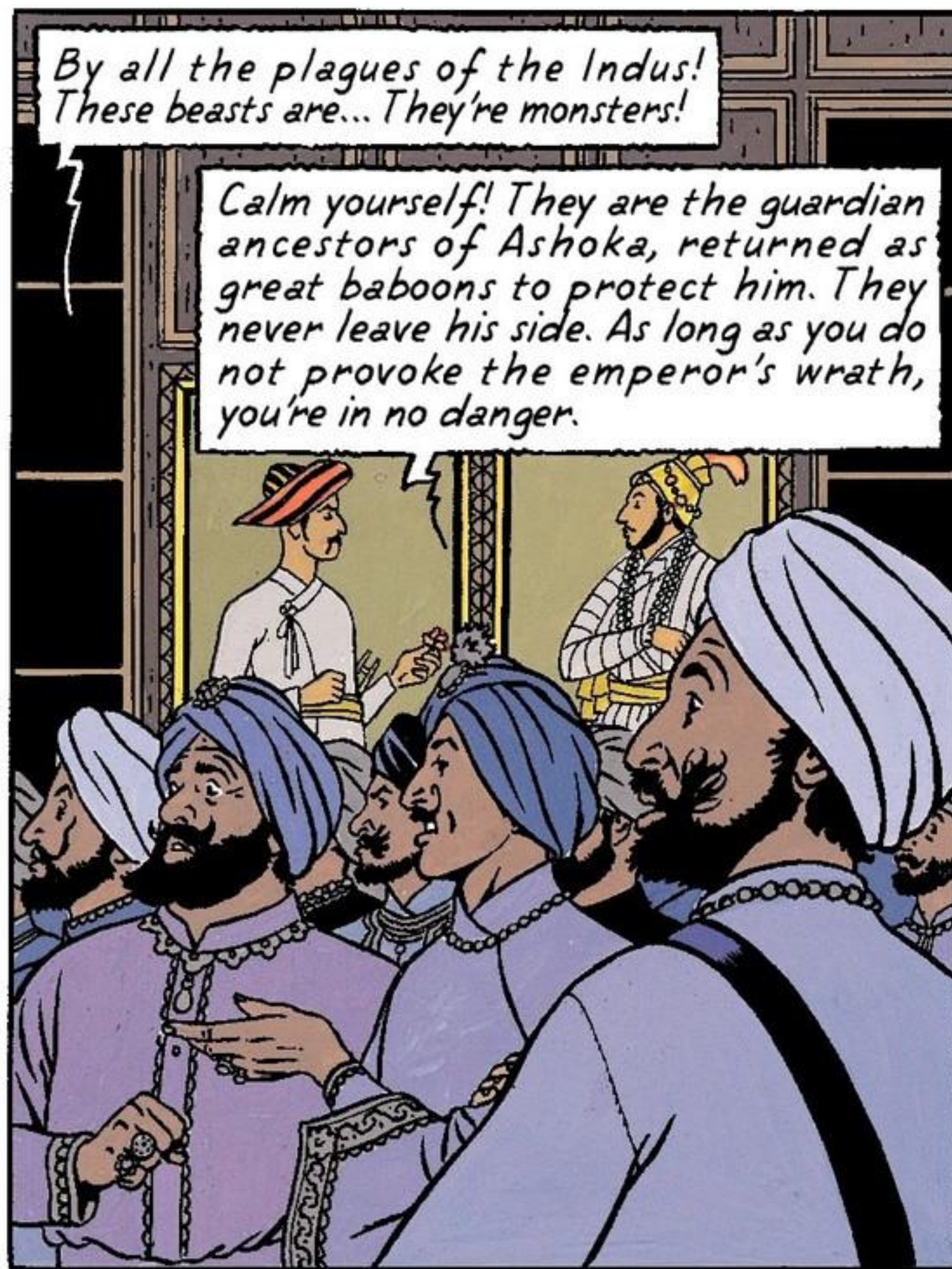
Not only was Ashoka the greatest emperor of that dynasty, for uniting India for the first time before the barbarians, the Turks and the British invaded it... but he was also the greatest of sorcerers. It is indeed Ashoka who has returned to give us back our power and our pride. You can believe it, my friend.



More than that... I advise you to believe it!

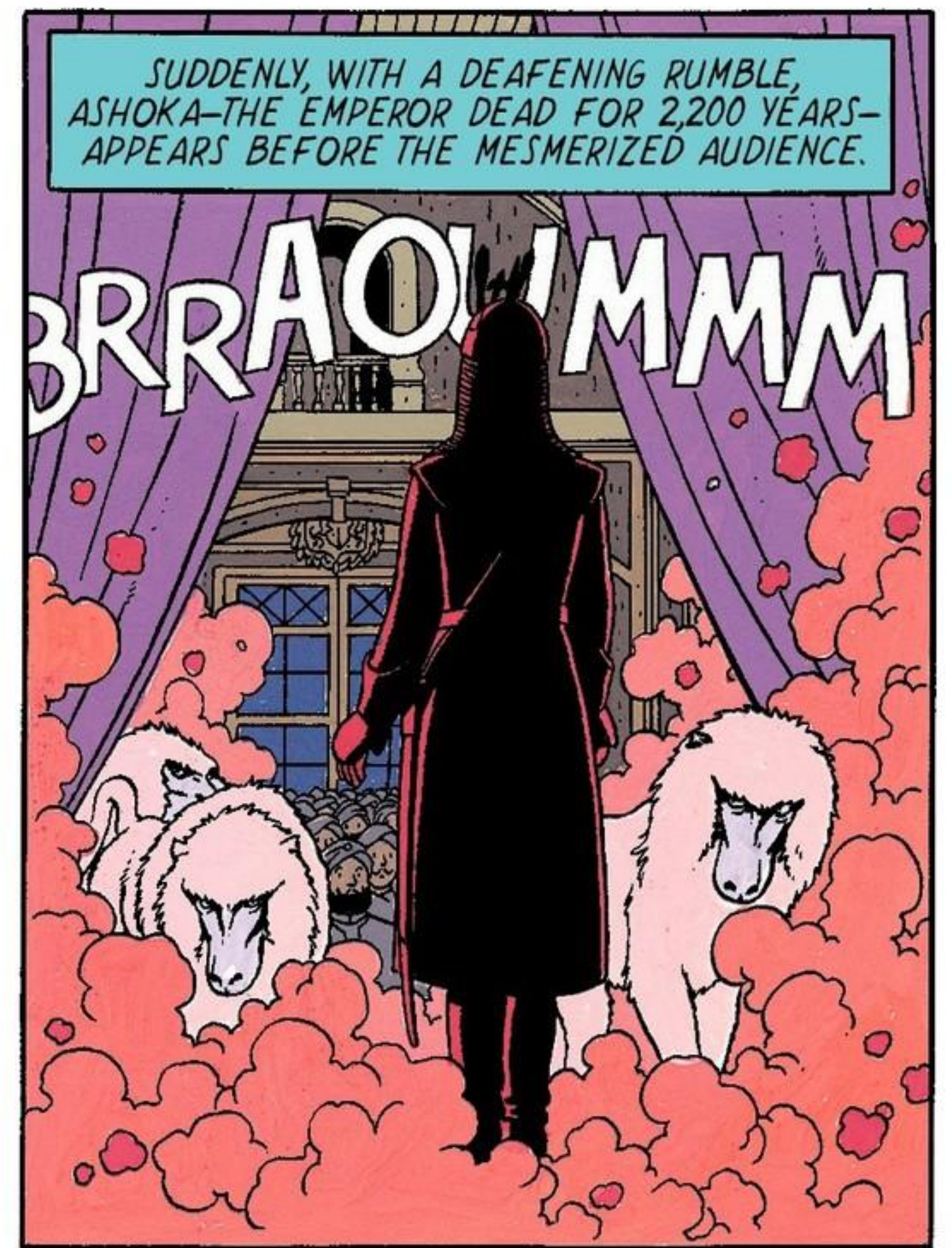


Let there be silence! His Immortal Highness, Emperor Ashoka, will appear to you.



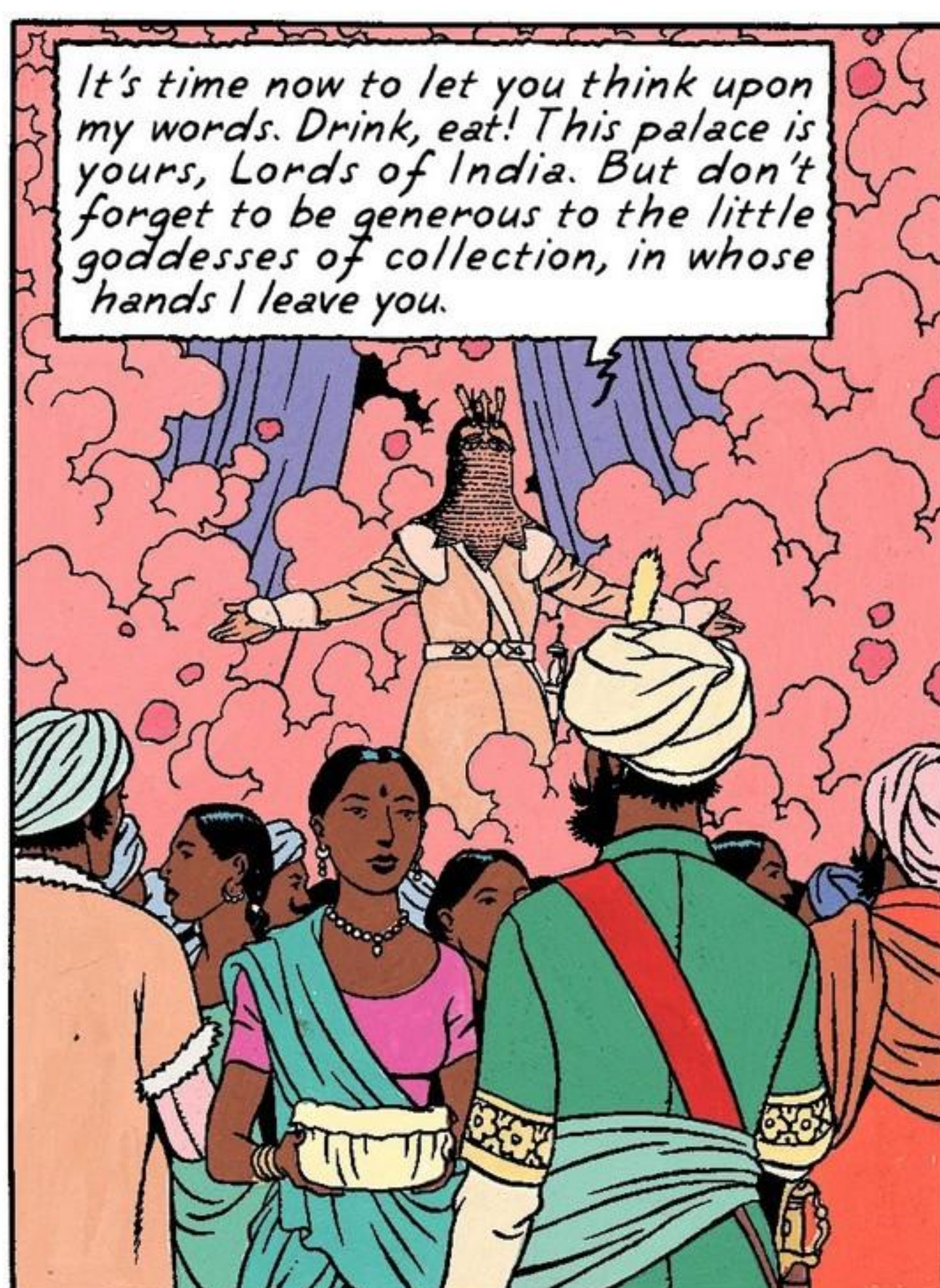
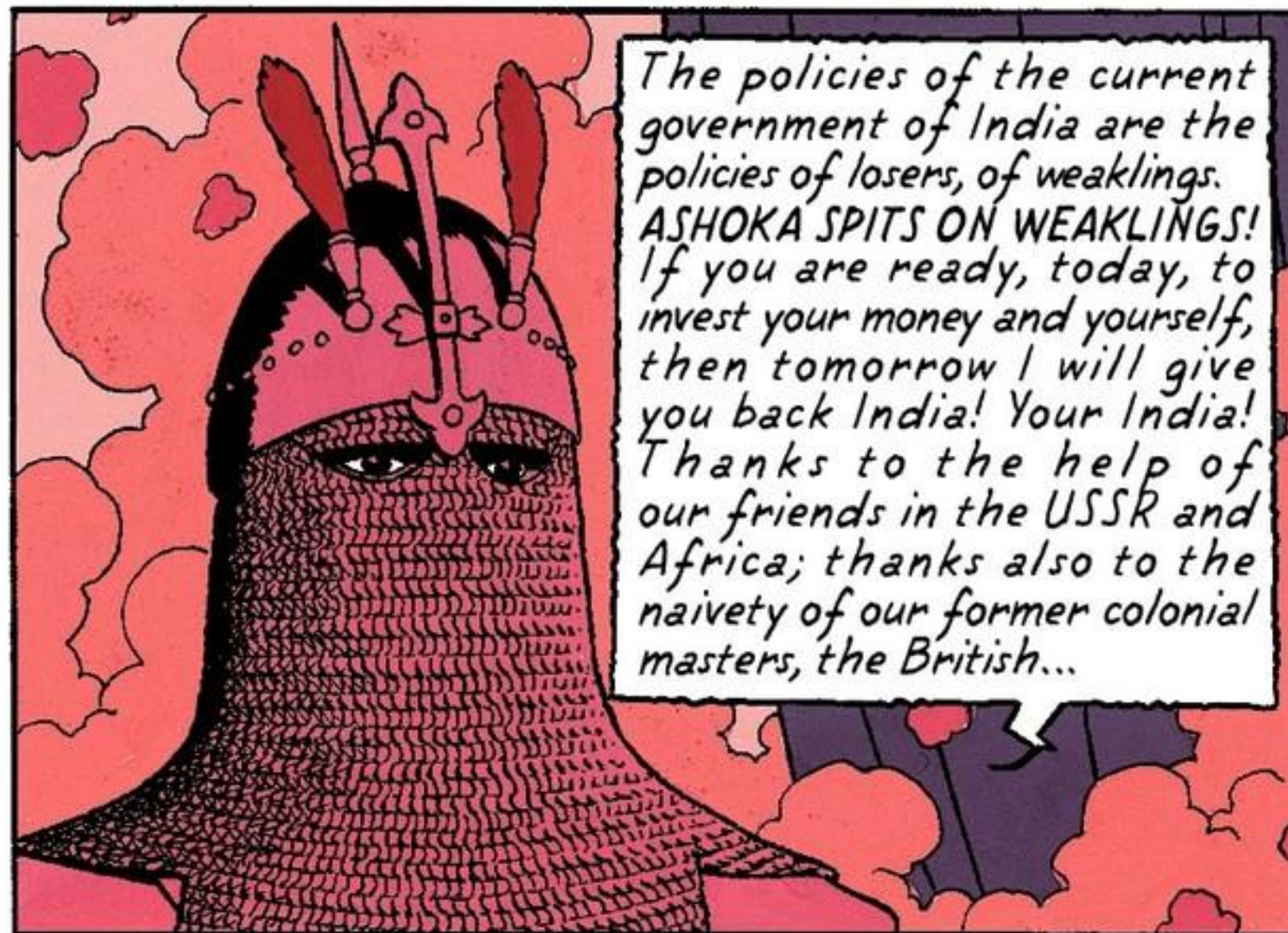
By all the plagues of the Indus! These beasts are... They're monsters!

Calm yourself! They are the guardian ancestors of Ashoka, returned as great baboons to protect him. They never leave his side. As long as you do not provoke the emperor's wrath, you're in no danger.

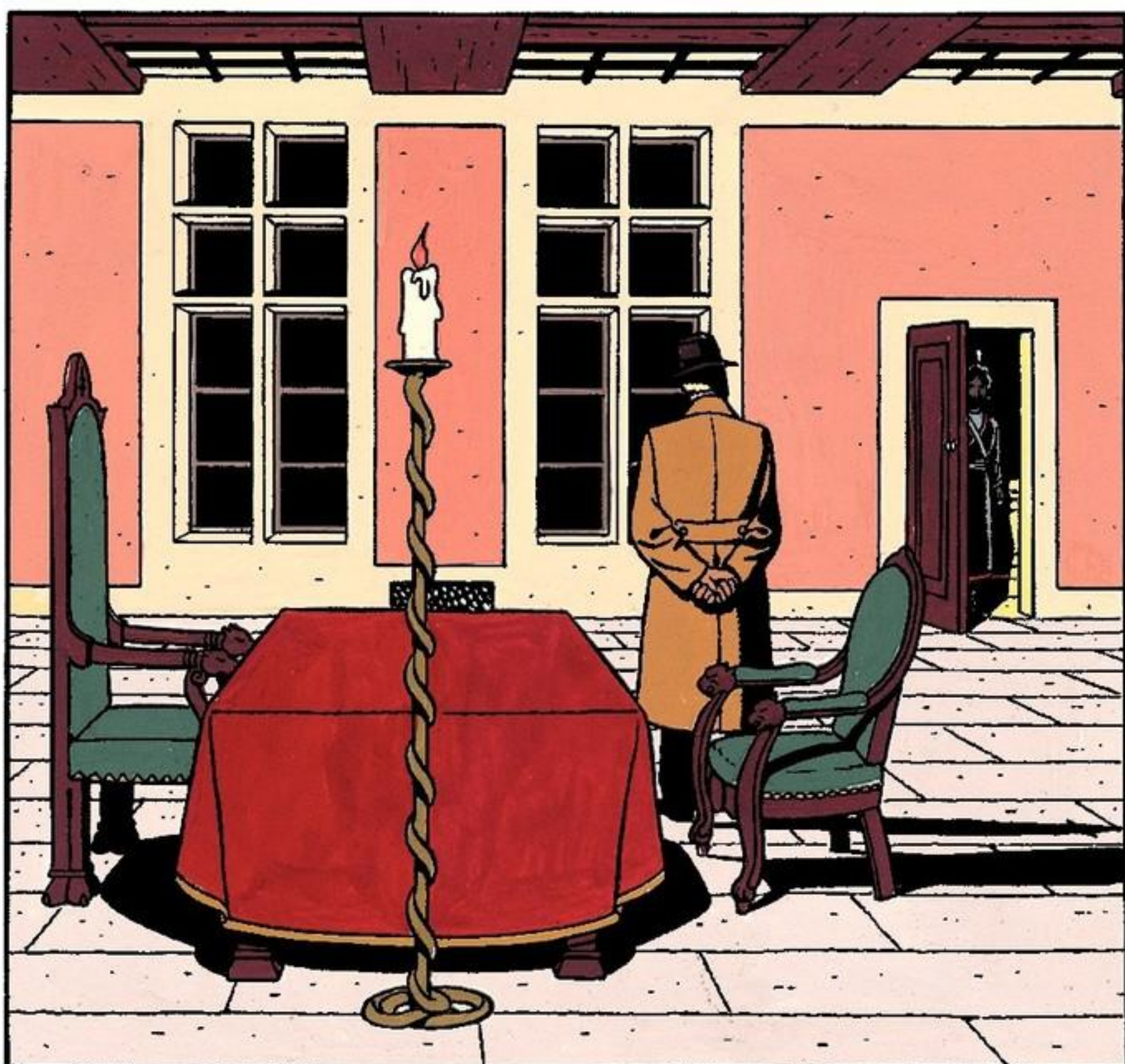


SUDDENLY, WITH A DEAFENING RUMBLE, ASHOKA—THE EMPEROR DEAD FOR 2,200 YEARS—APPEARS BEFORE THE MESMERIZED AUDIENCE.

BRRRAO! MMM



WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, RAJAK SHUTS THE DOOR BEHIND THE SOVIET VISITOR AND LEAVES HIM ALONE IN EMPEROR ASHOKA'S OFFICE.



Good evening, Major Varich. Please, sit down.

Good evening, Your Majesty.



Construction of the base is progressing as planned.

Very good. And... the target?



I believe I have found the ideal operational theatre for our first trials. You've probably heard of the Universal Exposition that will open in Brussels next April. What better target for a dramatic gesture intended to teach a lesson to the lesson-givers? Every Western country will be represented within a small area...



Which will allow...

BY SHIVA!

AAAAHHH!

?!



What's going on, Rajak?

I caught a phony servant listening at your window, Master. He managed to run away, but my knife didn't miss him. He won't go far. I'll have the hounds released.



Lieutenant, Na... Nasir...

What happened? All this commotion—is it about you?



By Vishnu! Don't move, my boy. I'm going to take out this knife. We'll...

N... No...



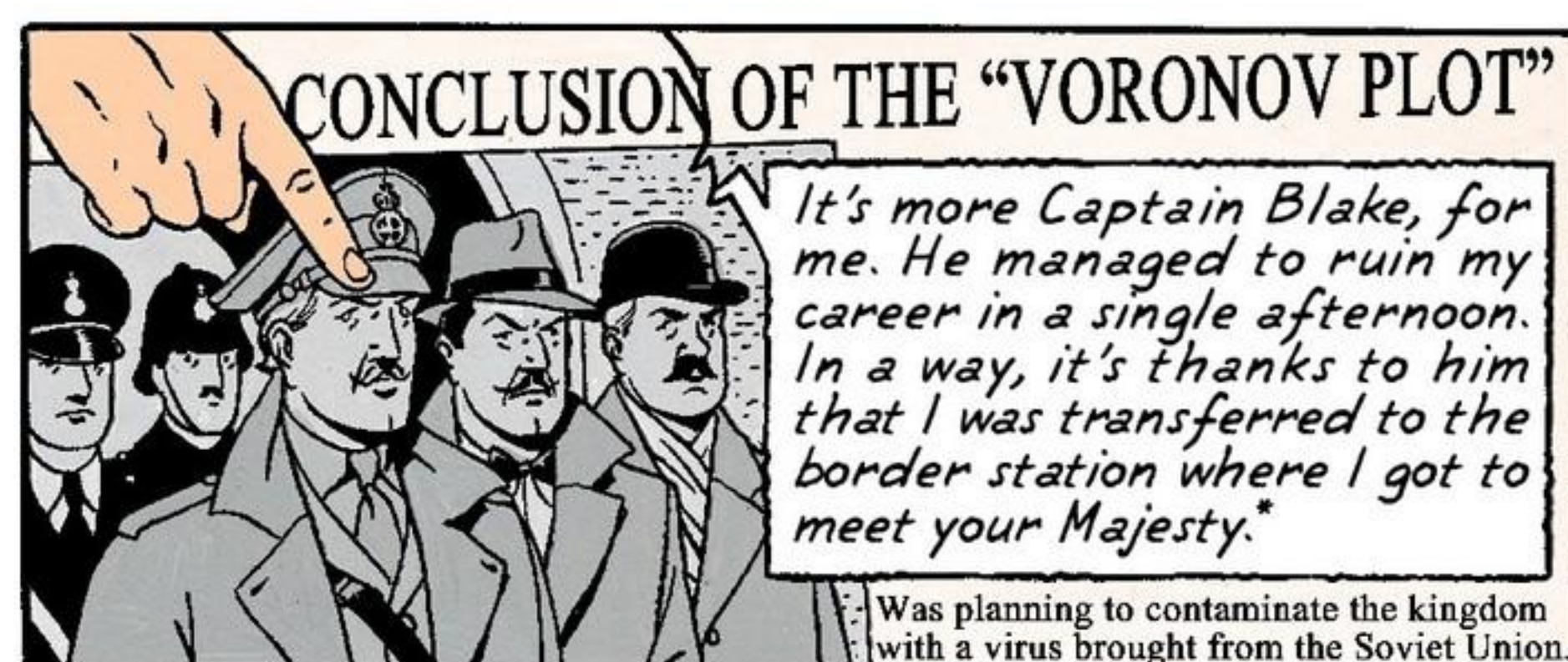
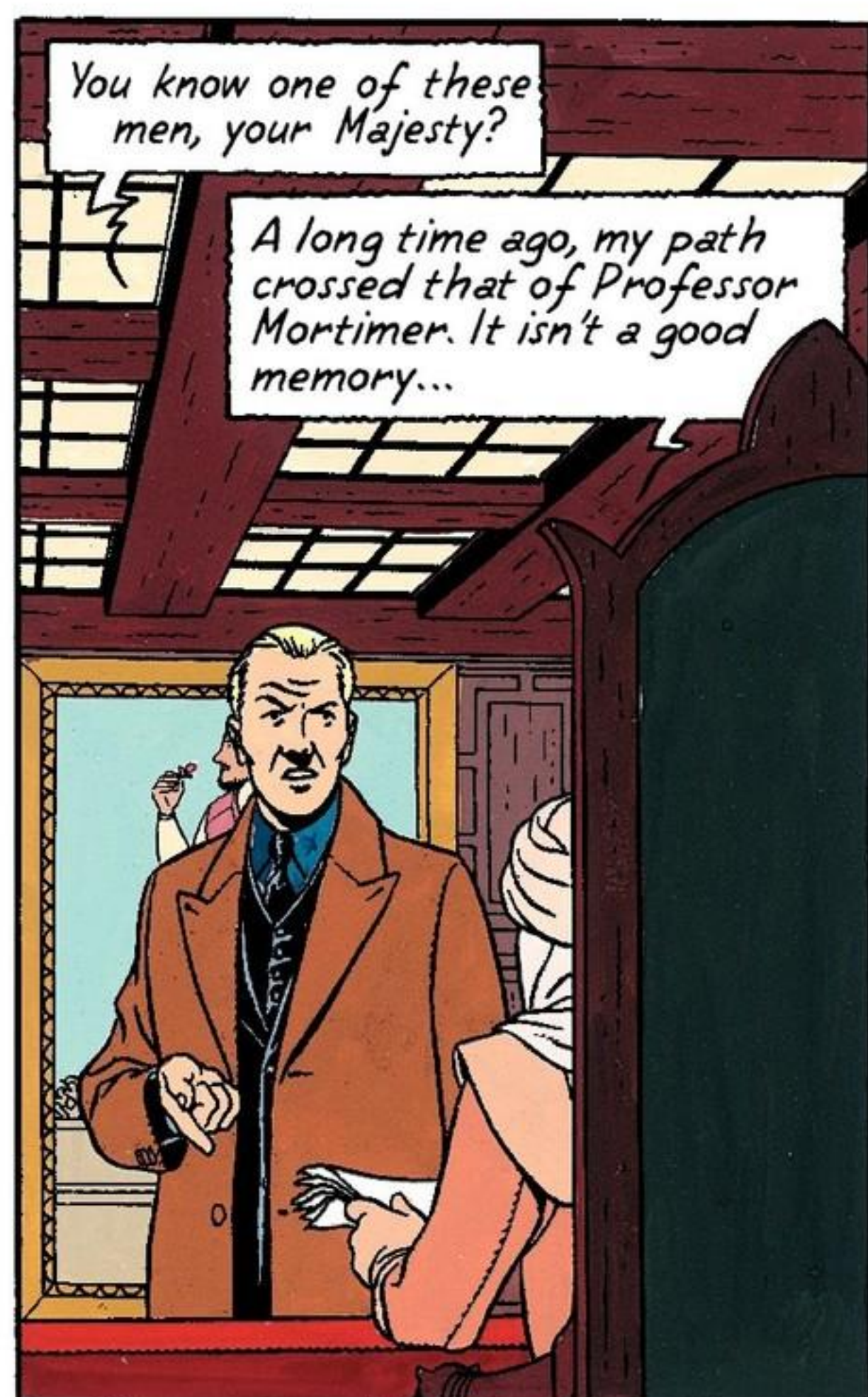
Too late... Listen to me before they arrive... Come closer...

Quick...



There! The dogs have smelled something!



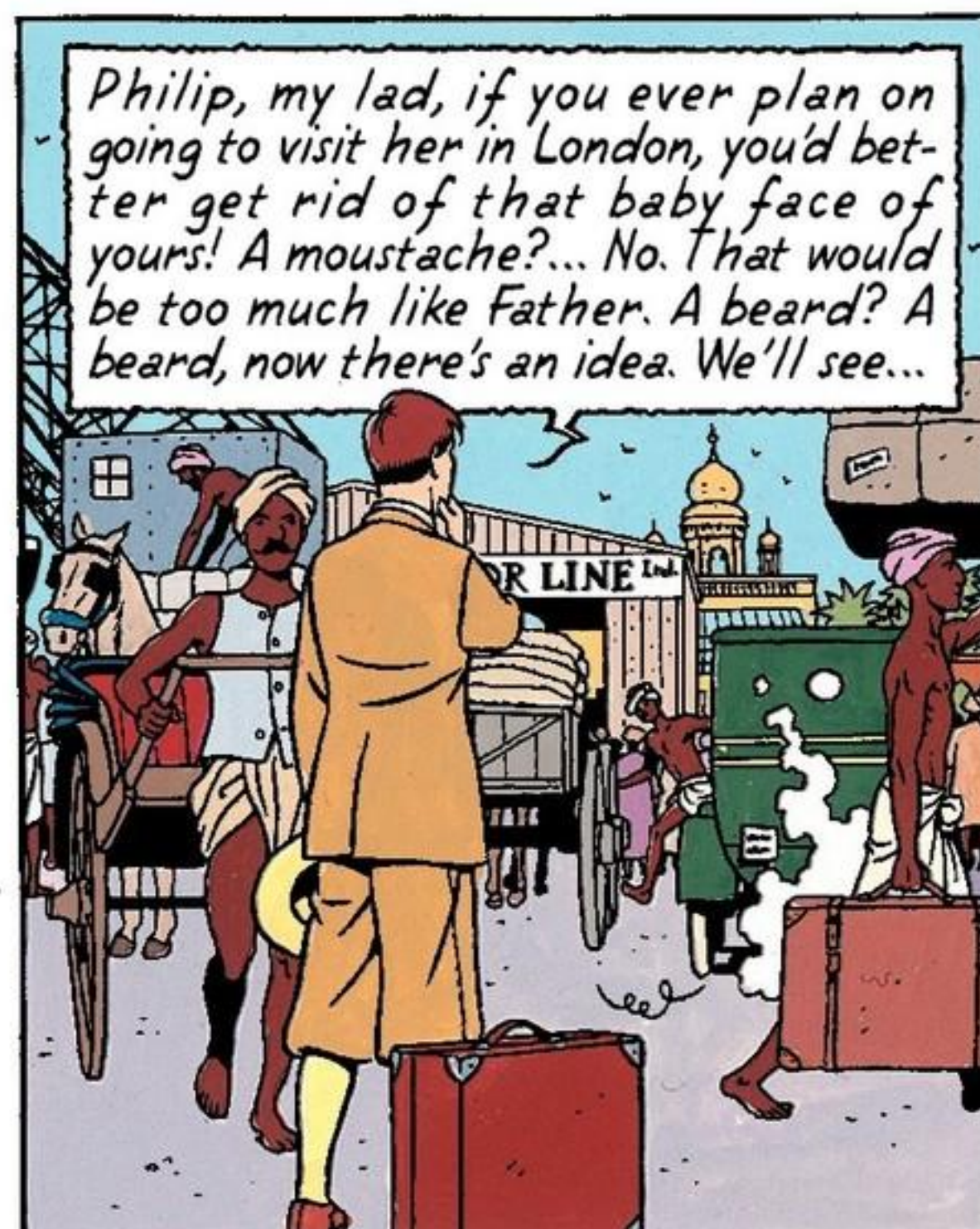
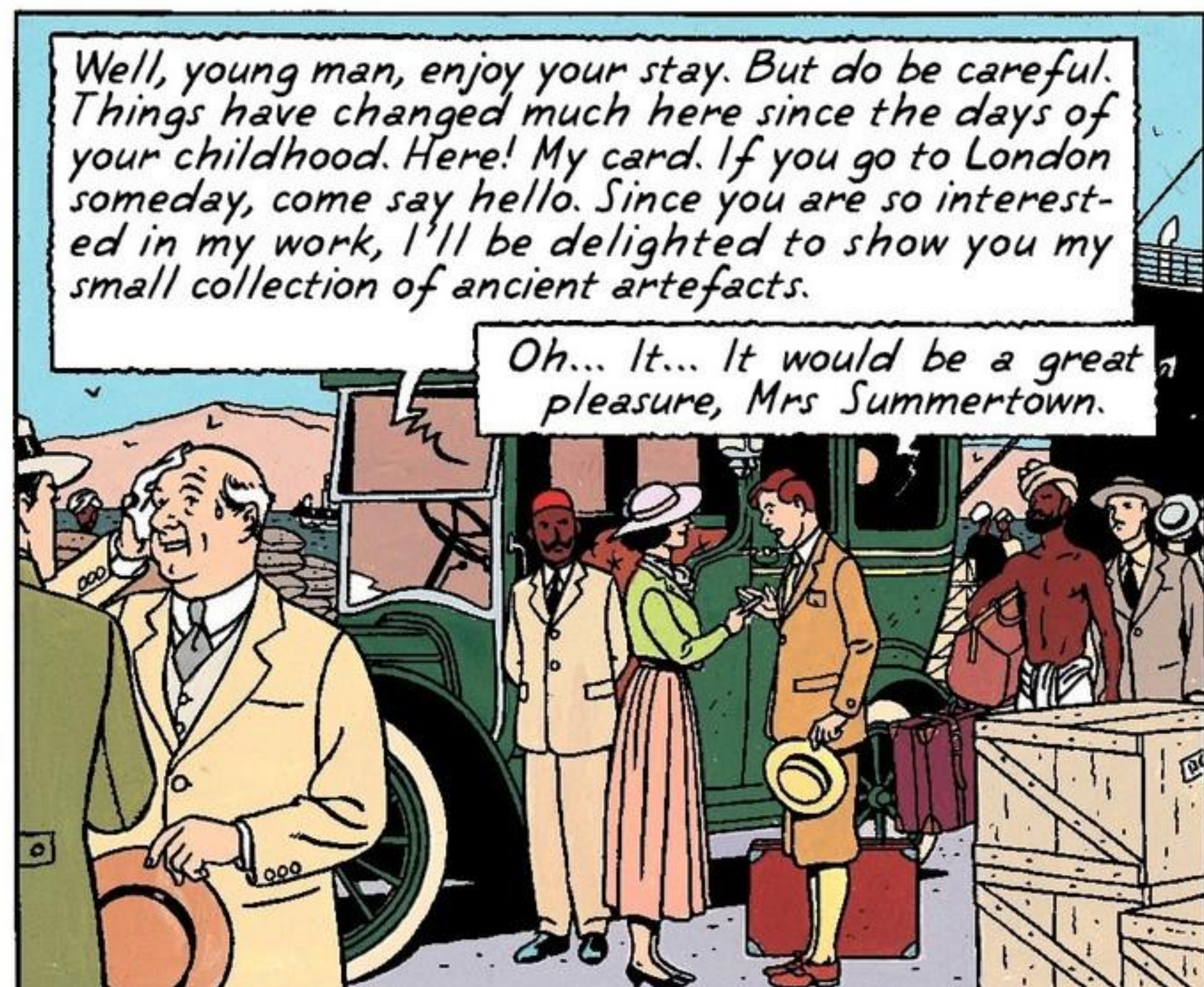
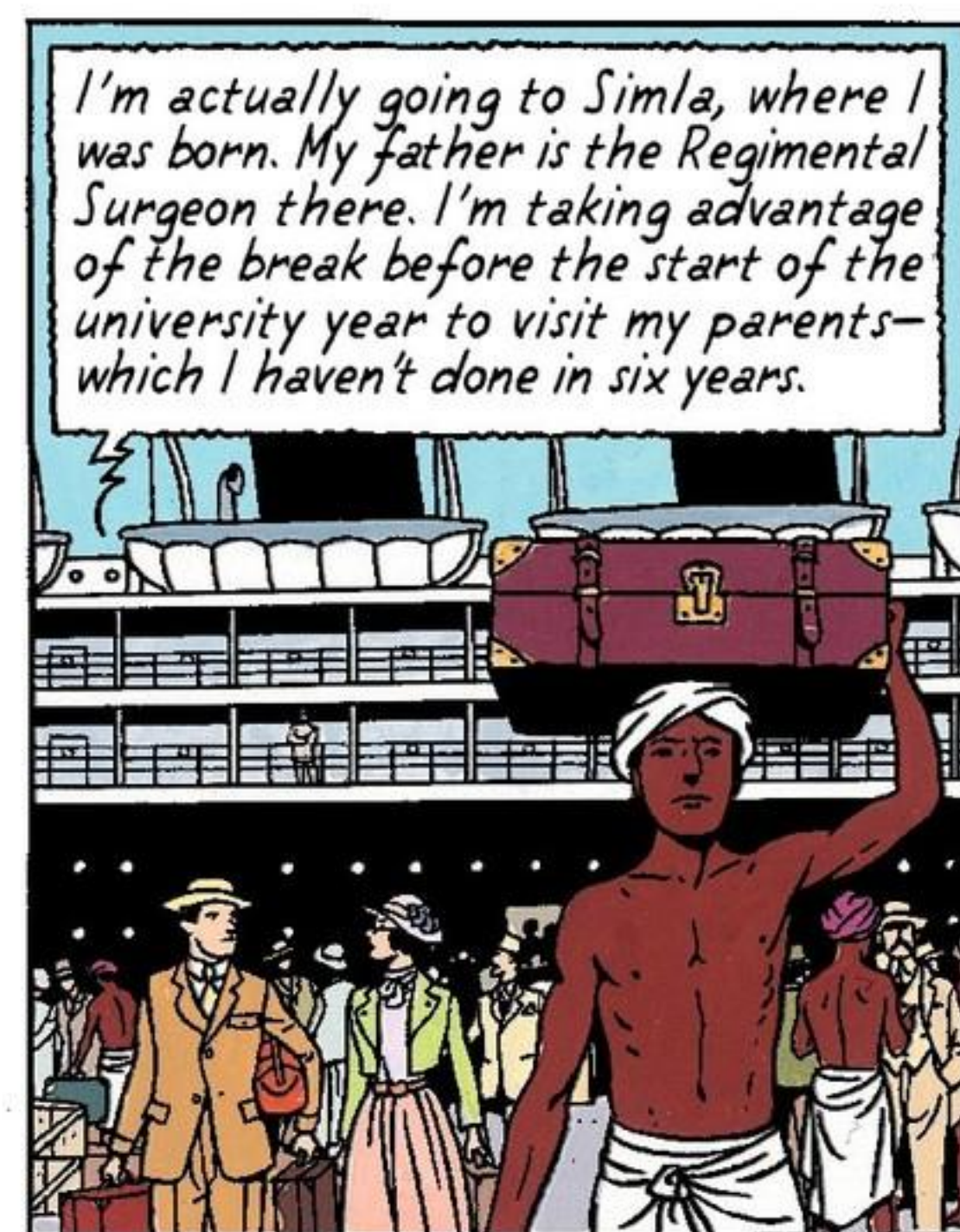
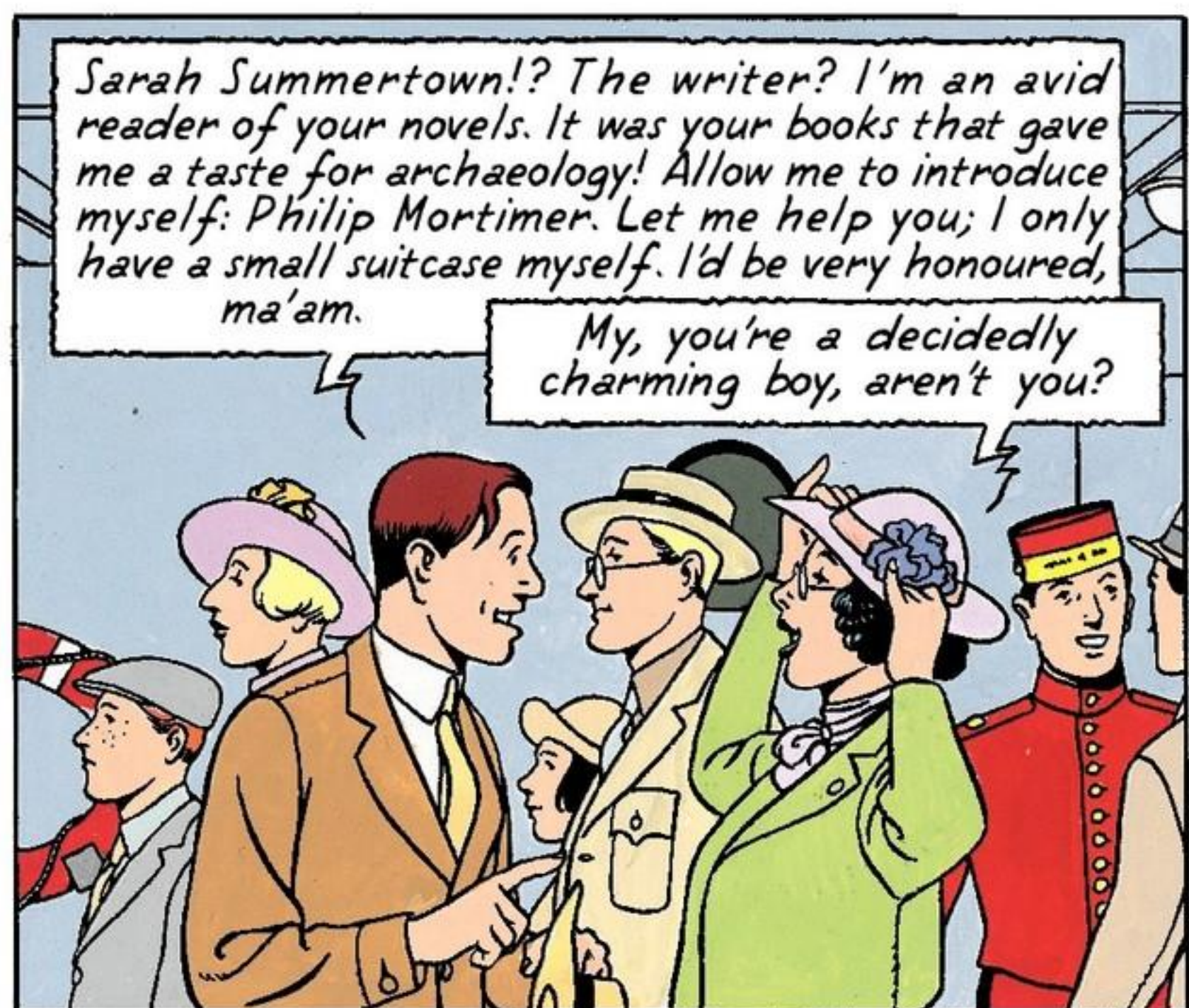
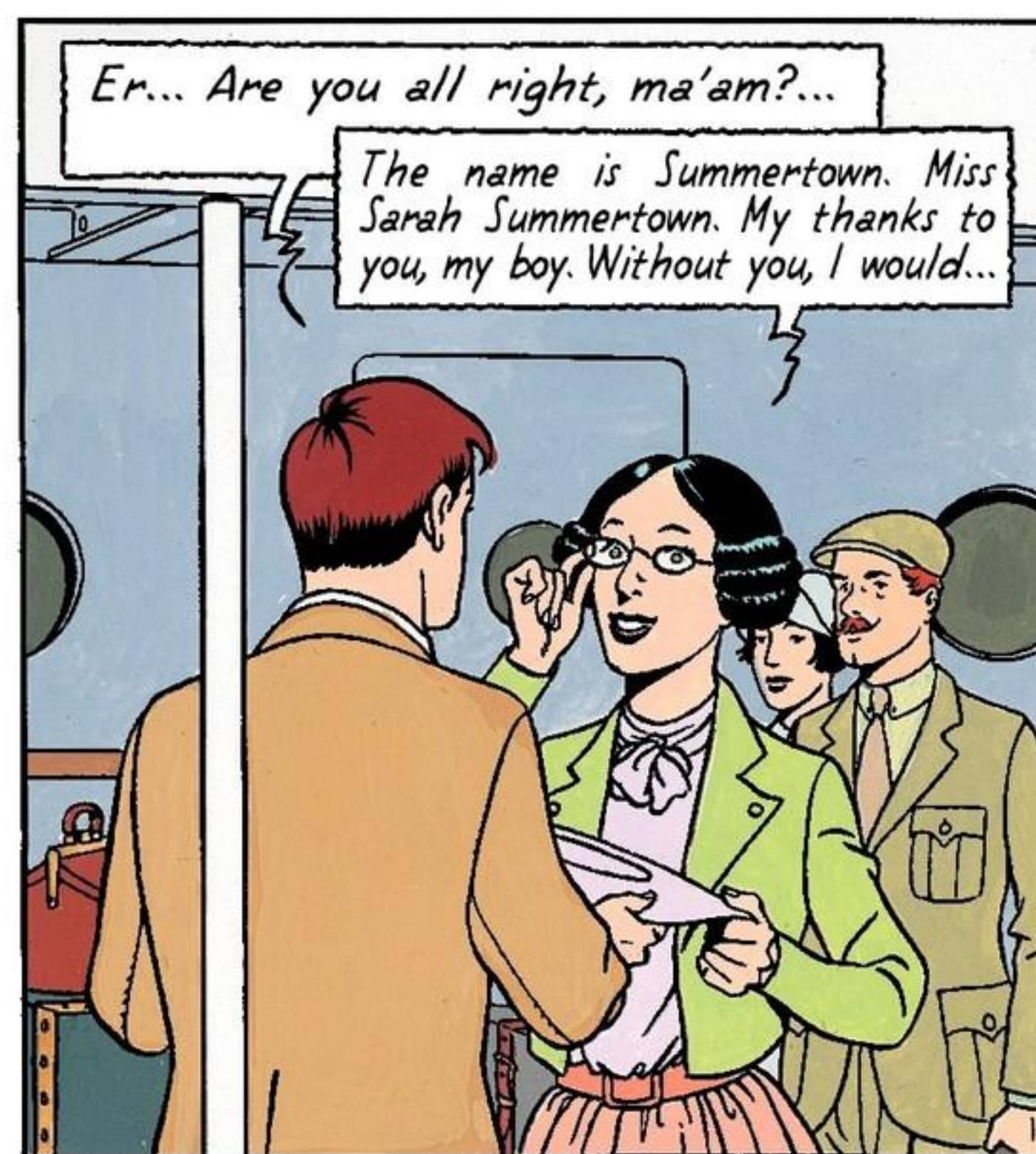


*SEE THE VORONOV PLOT.

INDEED, IT WAS MANY YEARS EARLIER THAT EMPEROR ASHOKA HAD MET A VERY YOUNG PHILIP MORTIMER. THE MONTH OF JUNE WAS PARTICULARLY HOT IN BOMBAY THAT YEAR. UNDER A SCORCHING SUN, THE OCEAN LINER CILICIA WAS PROCEEDING WITH ITS APPROACH MANOEUVRES OFF THE GATEWAY OF INDIA.



AT THE END OF A LONG JOURNEY THAT HAS BEGUN IN EDINBURGH AND PLYMOUTH AND TAKEN THEM THROUGH GIBRALTAR, PORT SAID, ADEN AND FINALLY BOMBAY, MOST OF THE PASSENGERS ARE EAGER TO DISEMBARK, AND HAVE GATHERED ON THE DECK WITH THEIR LUGGAGE. A YOUNG WOMAN STUMBLES IN THE CRUSH.



MOMENTS LATER, YOUNG PHILIP MORTIMER IS ENSCONCED IN A RICKSHAW AND ON HIS WAY TO VICTORIA STATION...

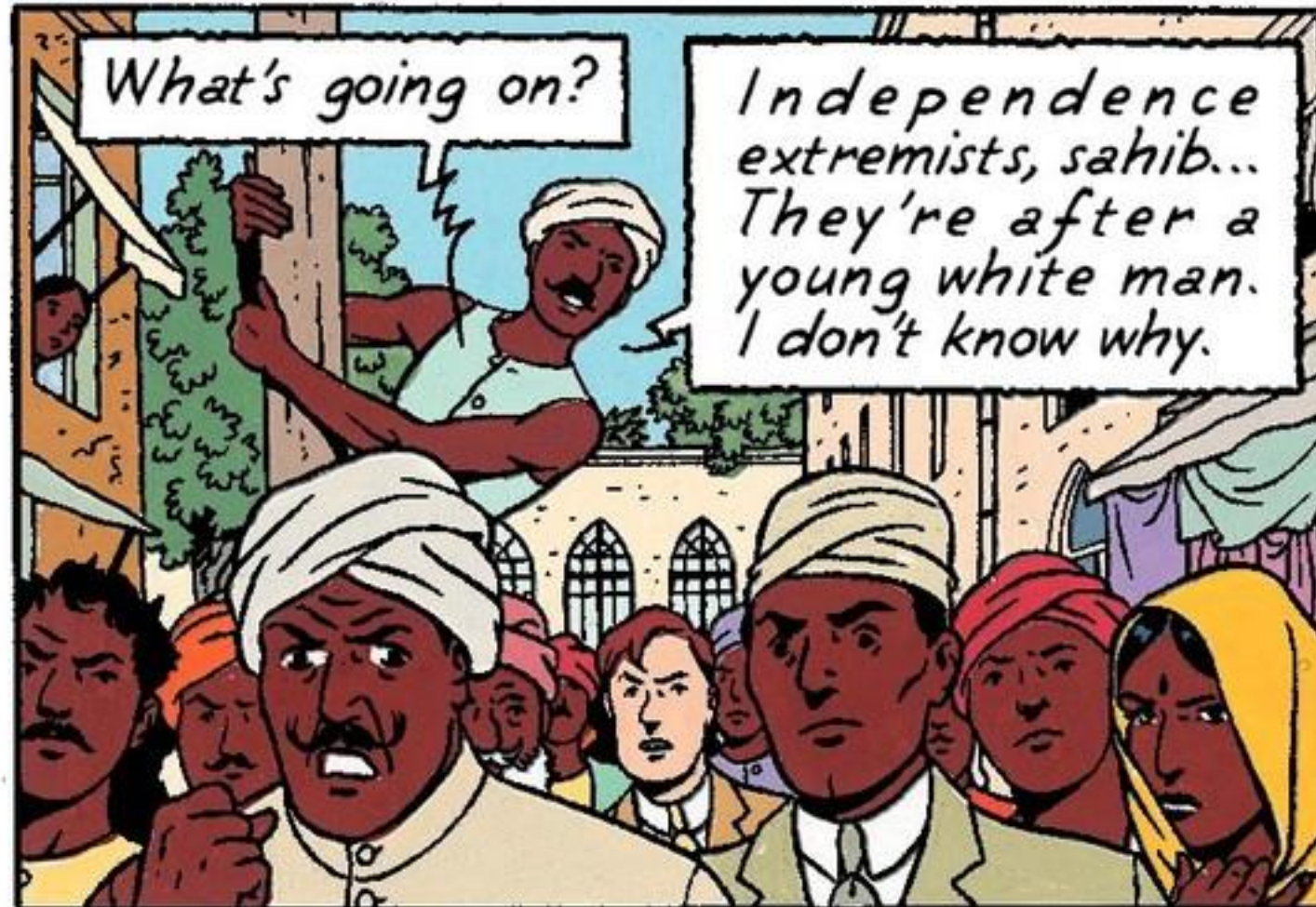


... ONLY TO BE STOPPED A FEW HUNDRED YARDS FURTHER ON, THE ROAD BLOCKED BY A CROWD.



What's going on?

Independence extremists, sahib... They're after a young white man. I don't know why.

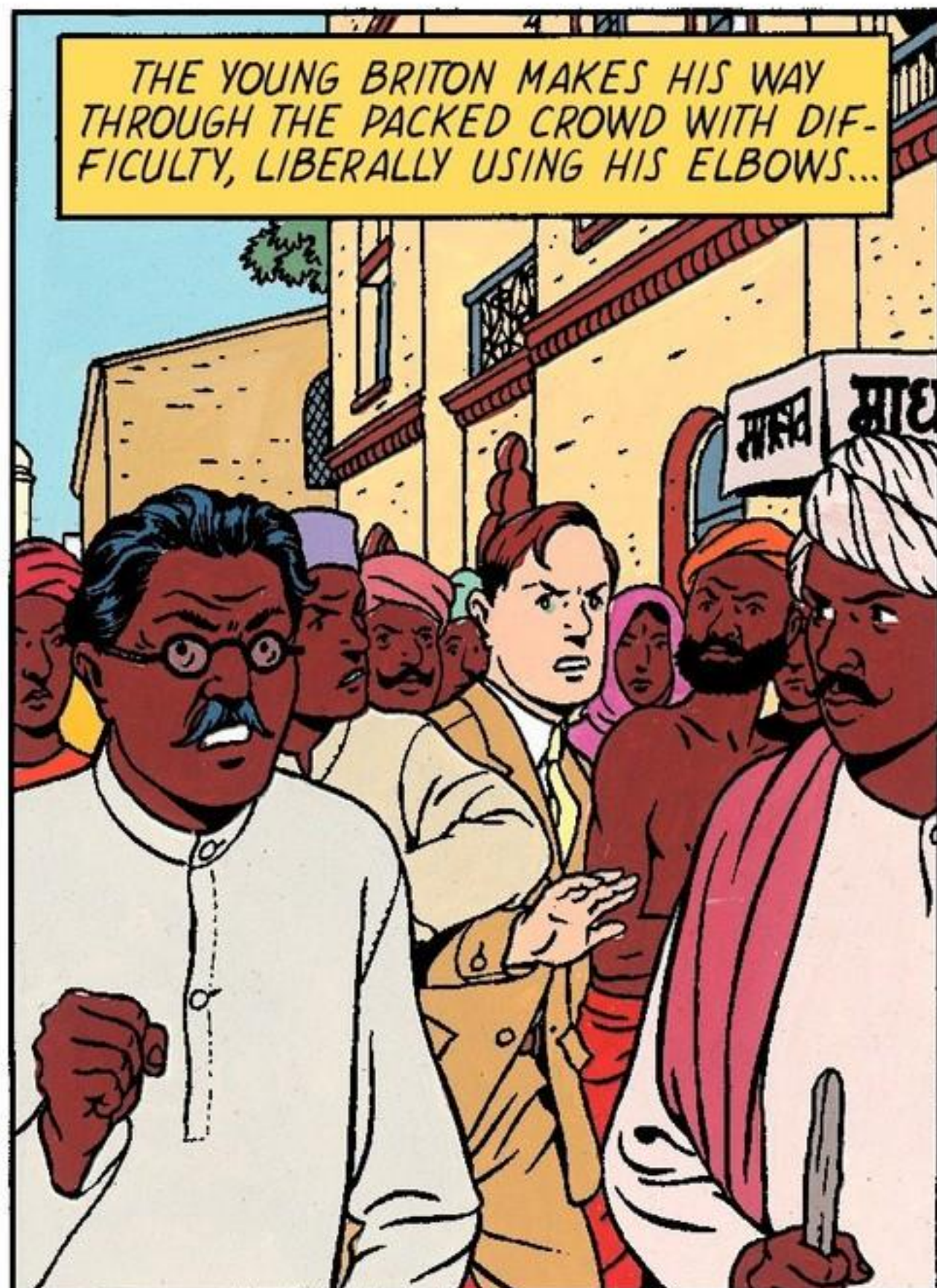


Extremists? A riot!? We can't let that happen!

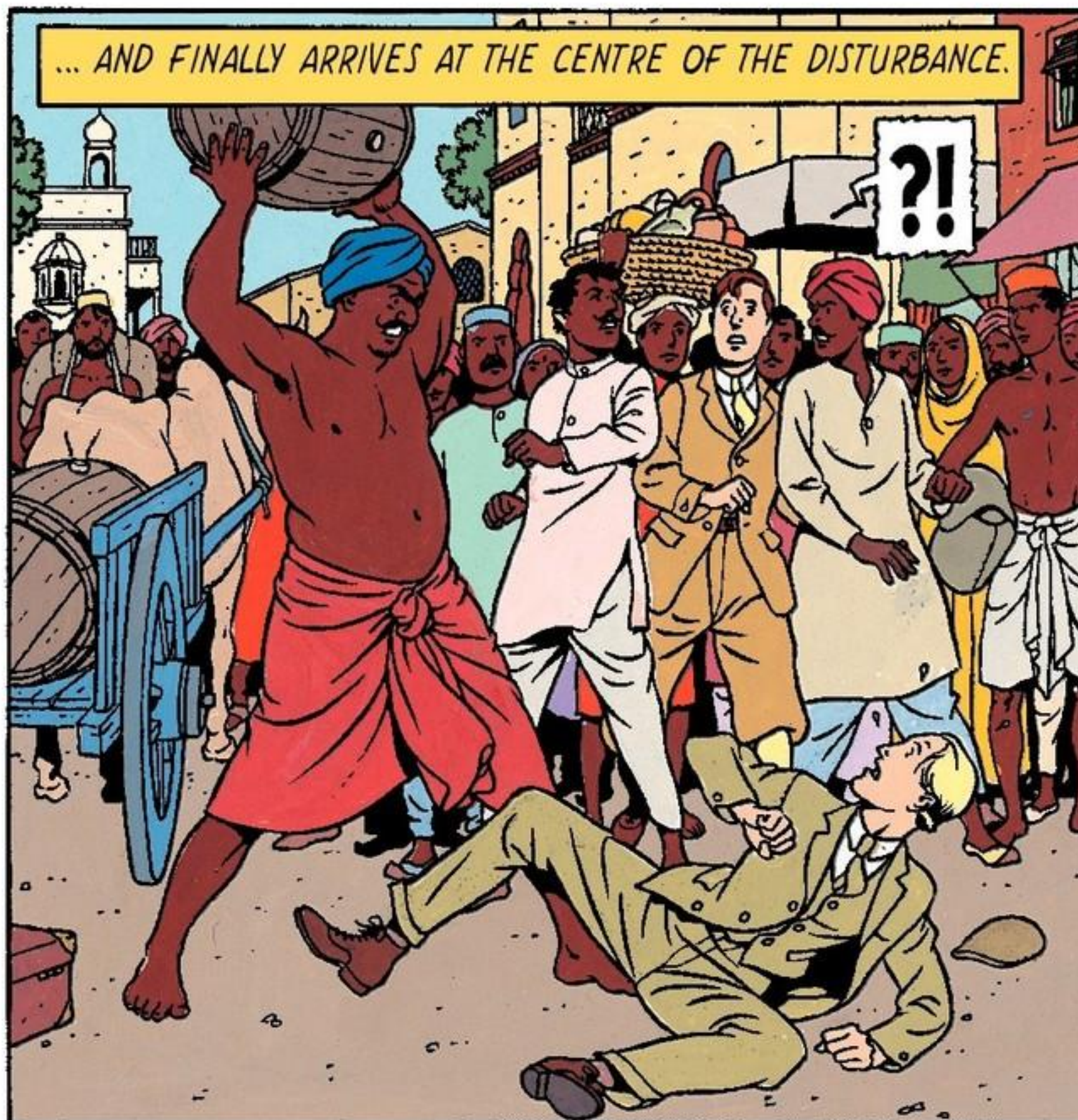
Sahib, please! These people are...



THE YOUNG BRITON MAKES HIS WAY THROUGH THE PACKED CROWD WITH DIFFICULTY, LIBERALLY USING HIS ELBOWS...



... AND FINALLY ARRIVES AT THE CENTRE OF THE DISTURBANCE.



WITH NO THOUGHT FOR HIS OWN SAFETY, THE FORMER ALLAN GLEN'S SCHOOL BOXING CHAMPION HITS THE GIANT WITH A POWERFUL UPPERCUT...

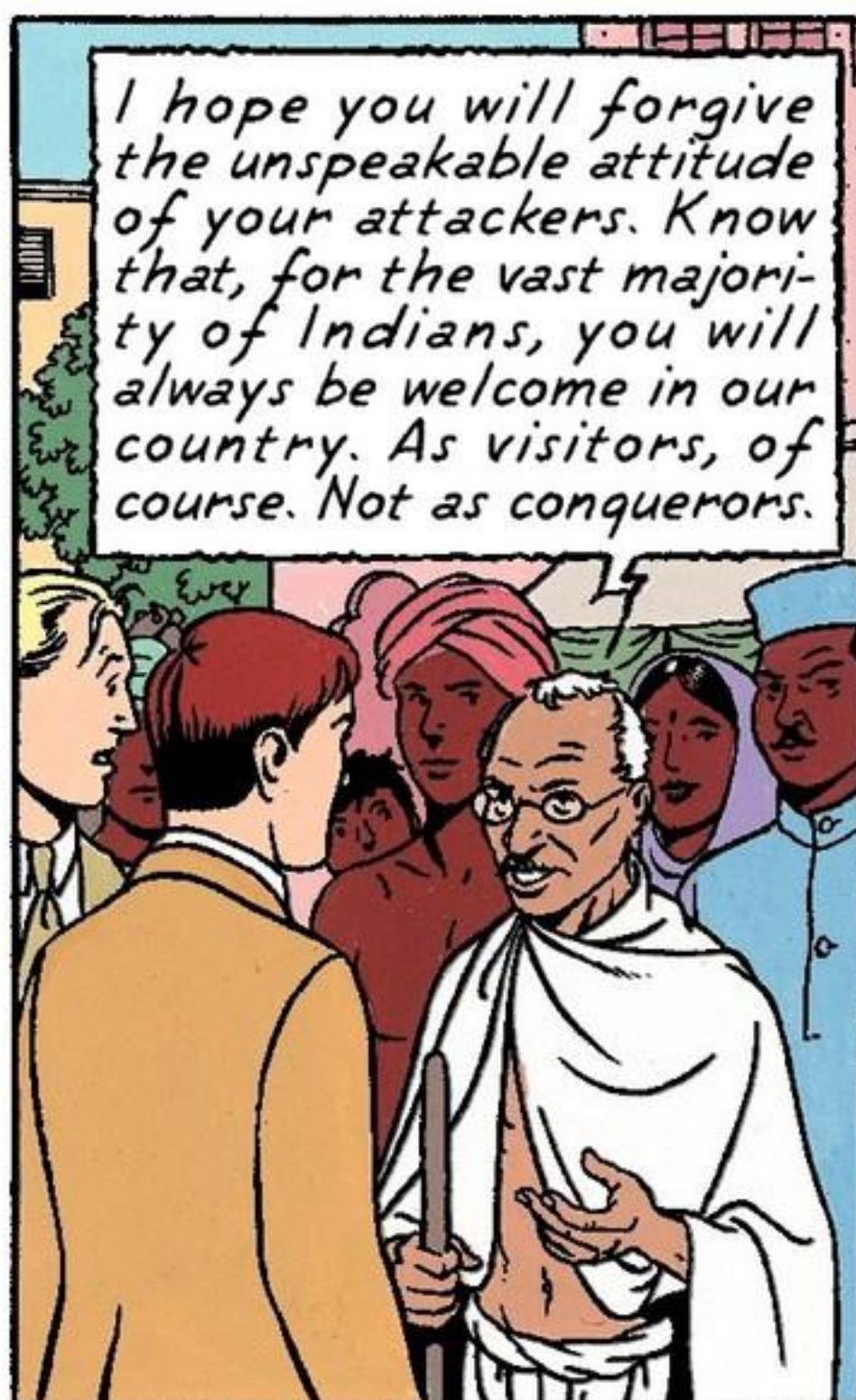


LOOK OUT!

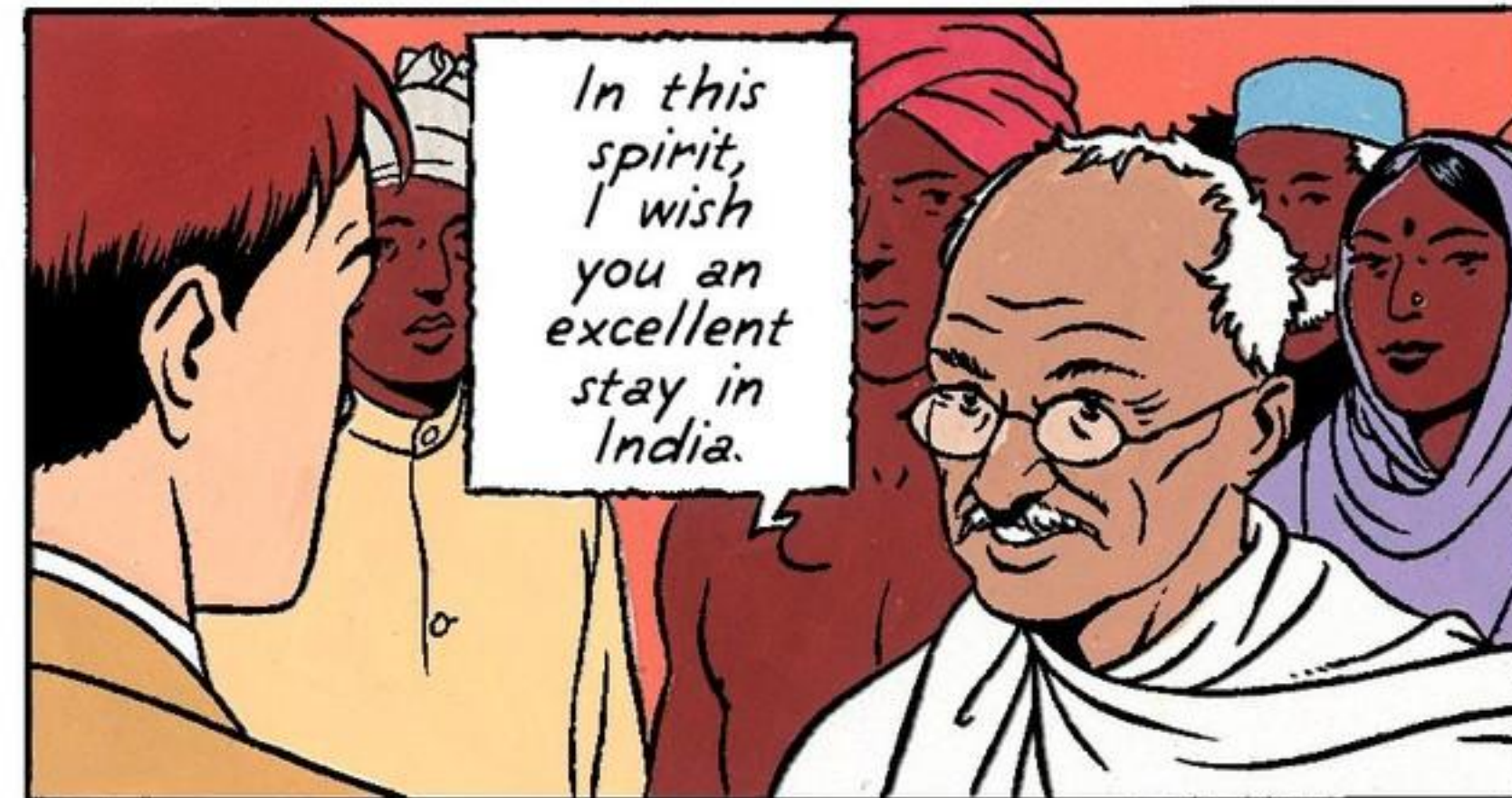


TO THE TWO YOUNGSTERS' RELIEF, THE UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE OF A STRANGE LITTLE MAN, COUPLED WITH THE WHISTLE BLOWS ANNOUNCING THE ARRIVAL OF THE POLICE, MAKE KNIVES DISAPPEAR AS IF BY MAGIC.

I hope you will forgive the unspeakable attitude of your attackers. Know that, for the vast majority of Indians, you will always be welcome in our country. As visitors, of course. Not as conquerors.



In this spirit, I wish you an excellent stay in India.



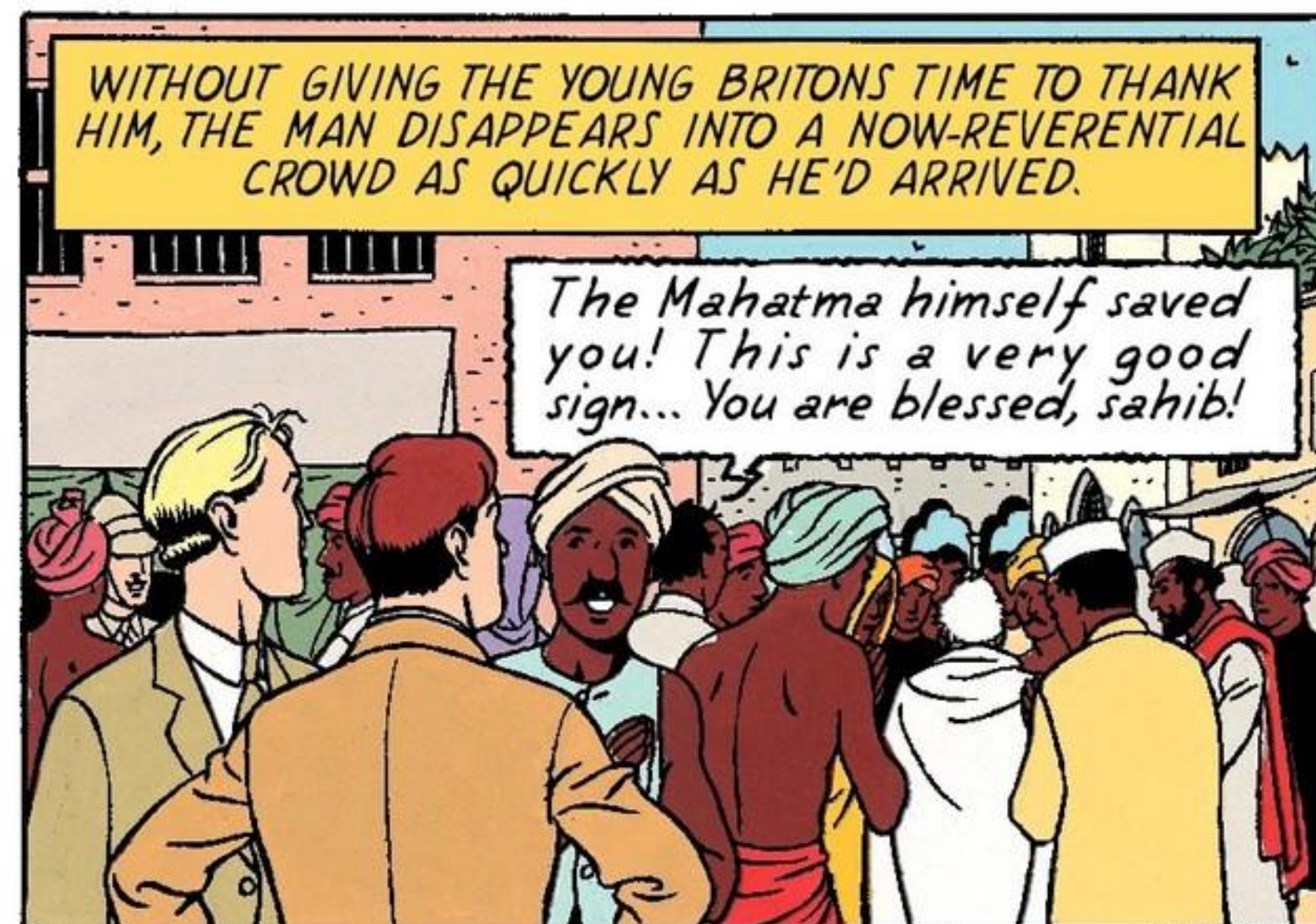
MORTIMER AND THE YOUNG STRANGER MAKE READY TO FACE NEW ATTACKERS, WHEN A VOICE COMING OUT OF THE CROWD COMMANDS THE ATTENTION OF ALL.

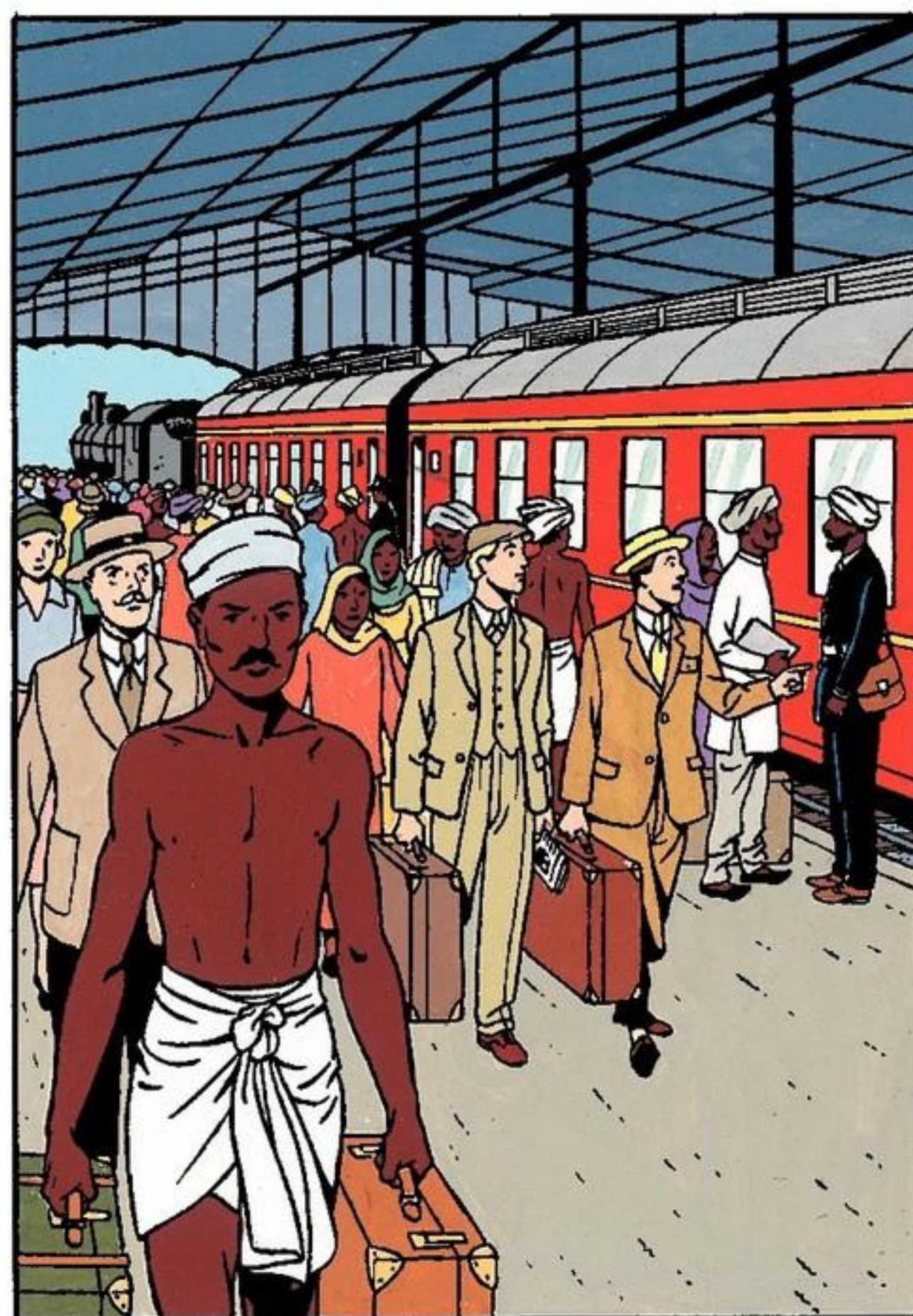
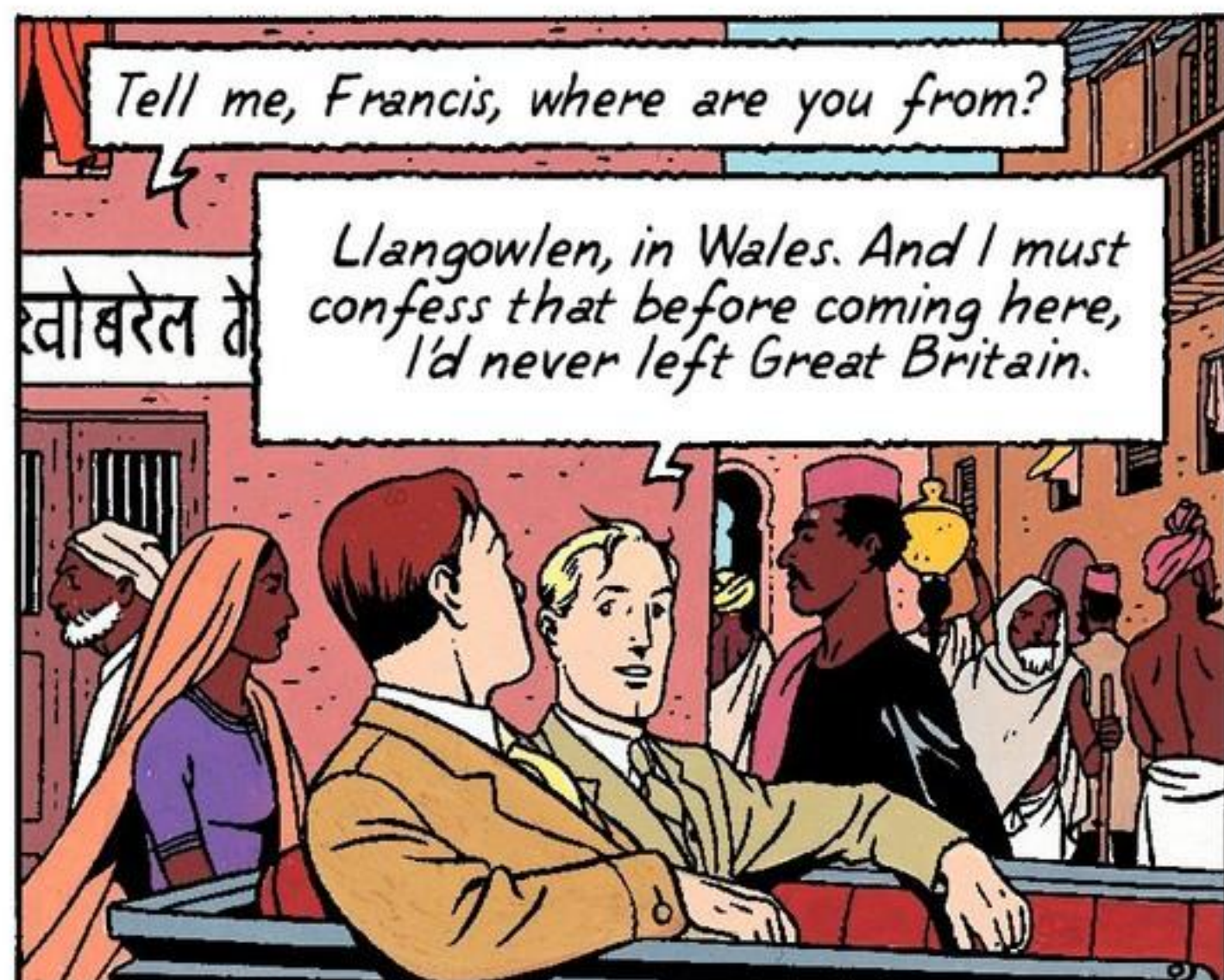
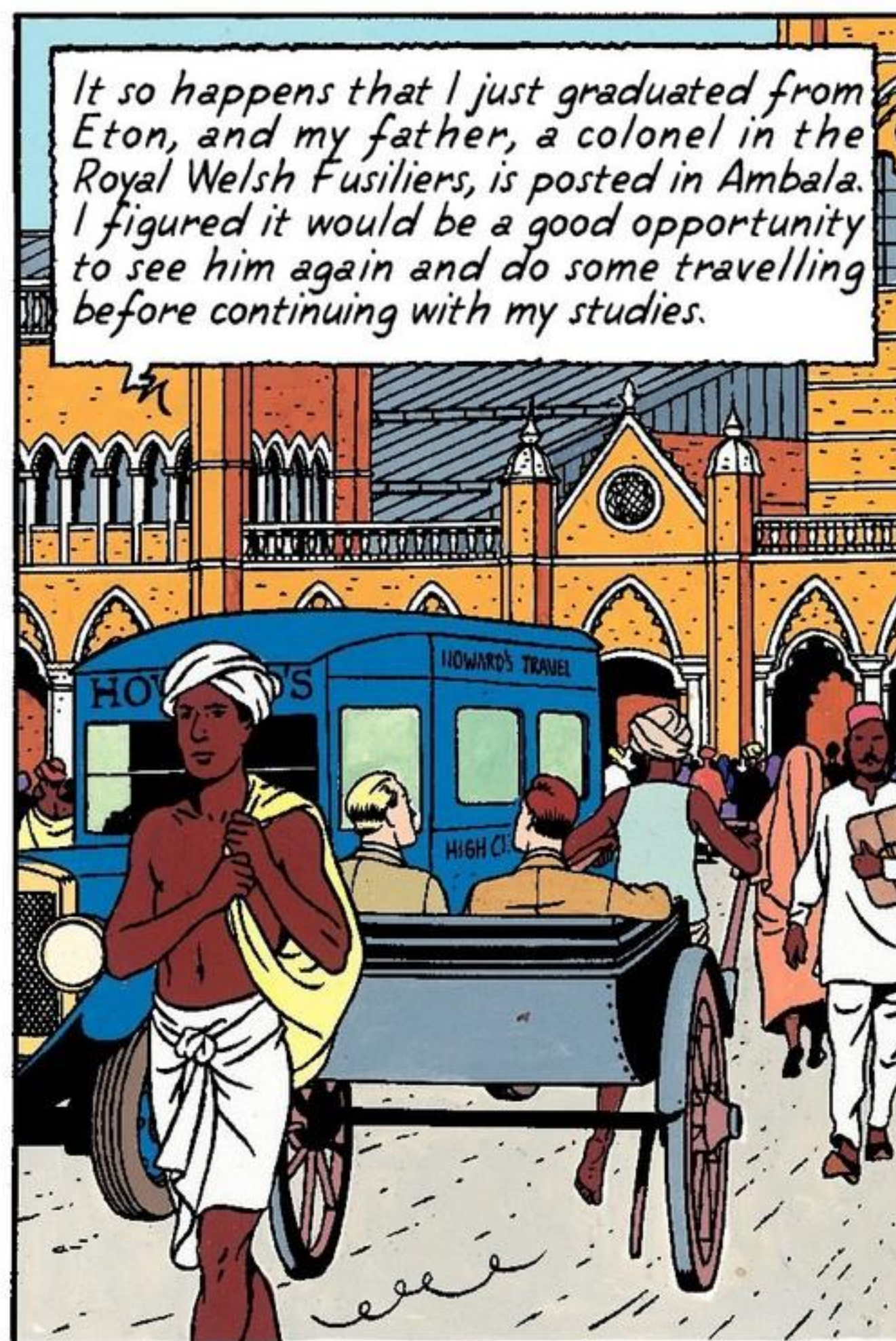
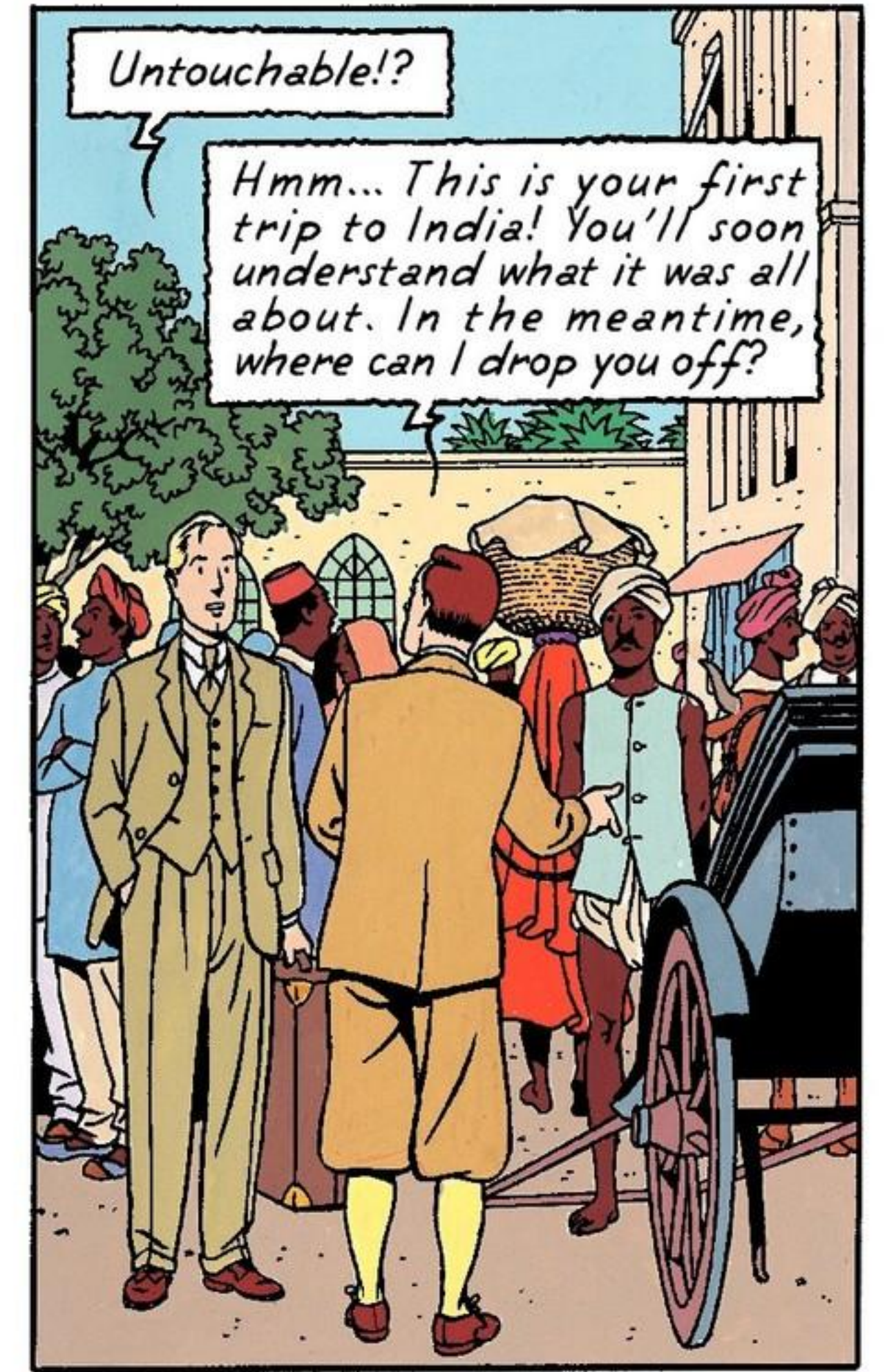
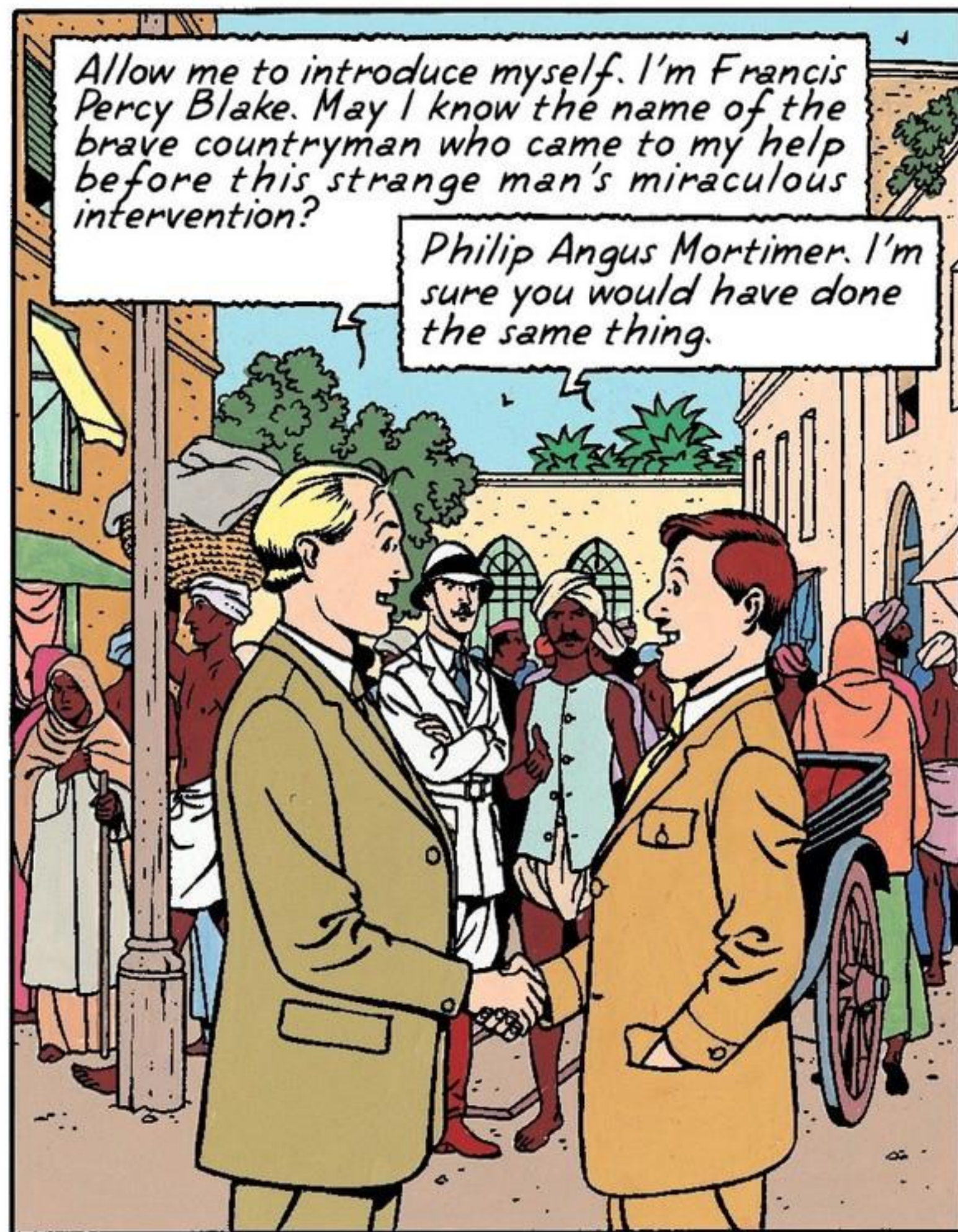
That's enough!



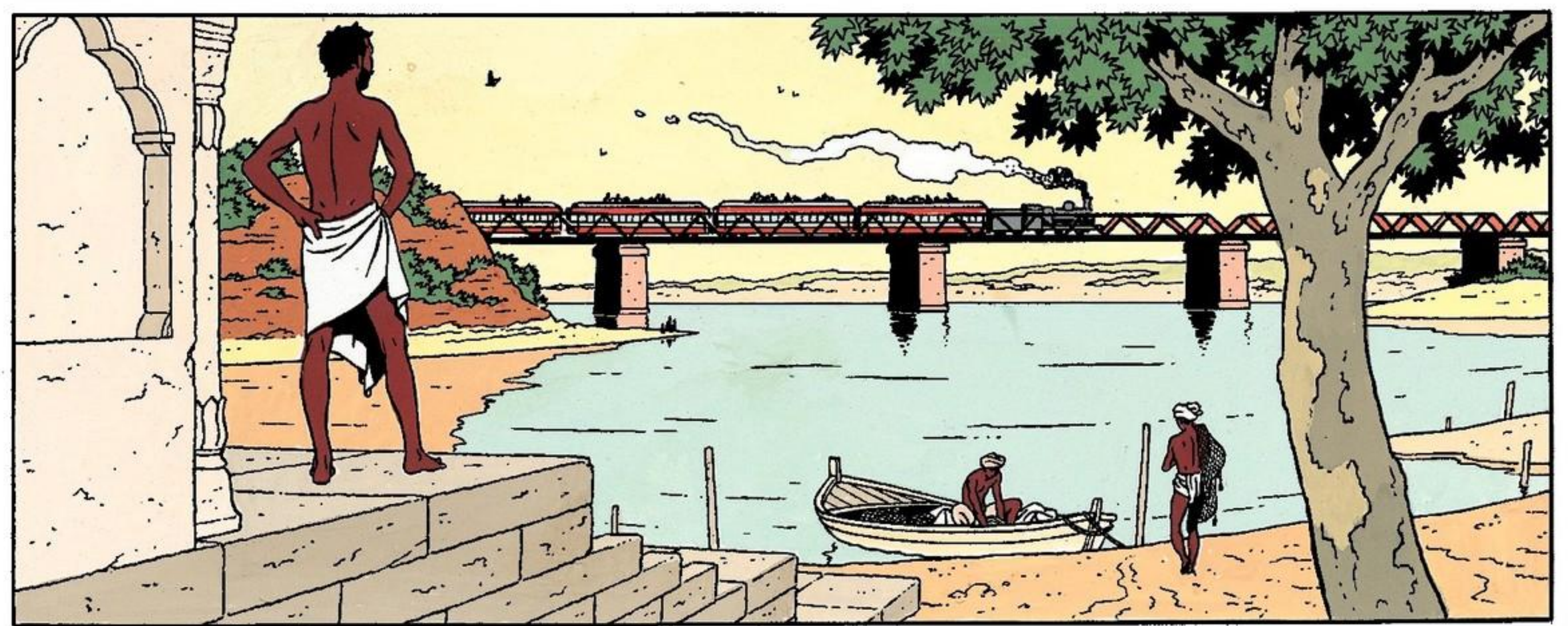
WITHOUT GIVING THE YOUNG BRITONS TIME TO THANK HIM, THE MAN DISAPPEARS INTO A NOW-REVERENTIAL CROWD AS QUICKLY AS HE'D ARRIVED.

The Mahatma himself saved you! This is a very good sign... You are blessed, sahib!

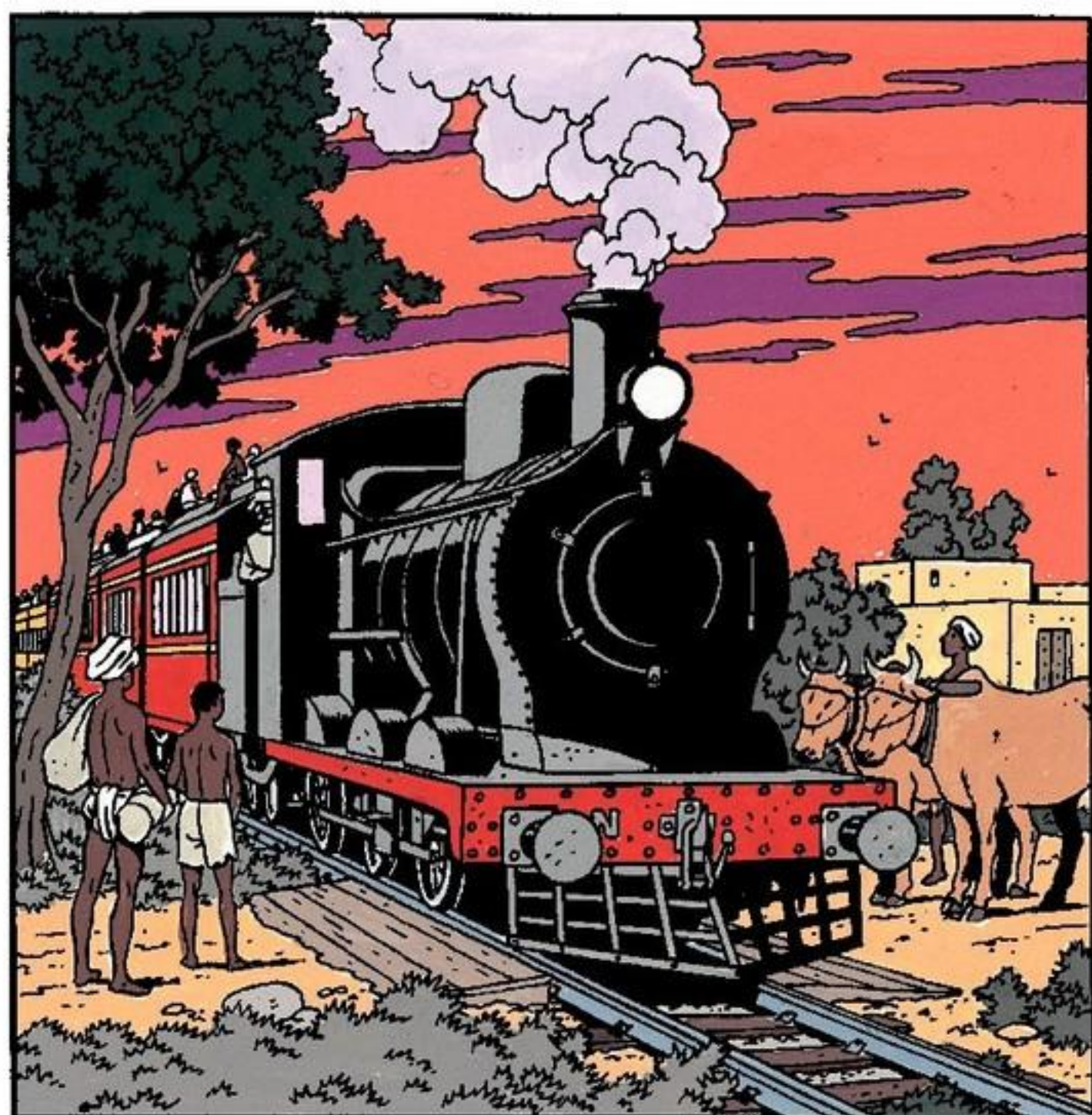




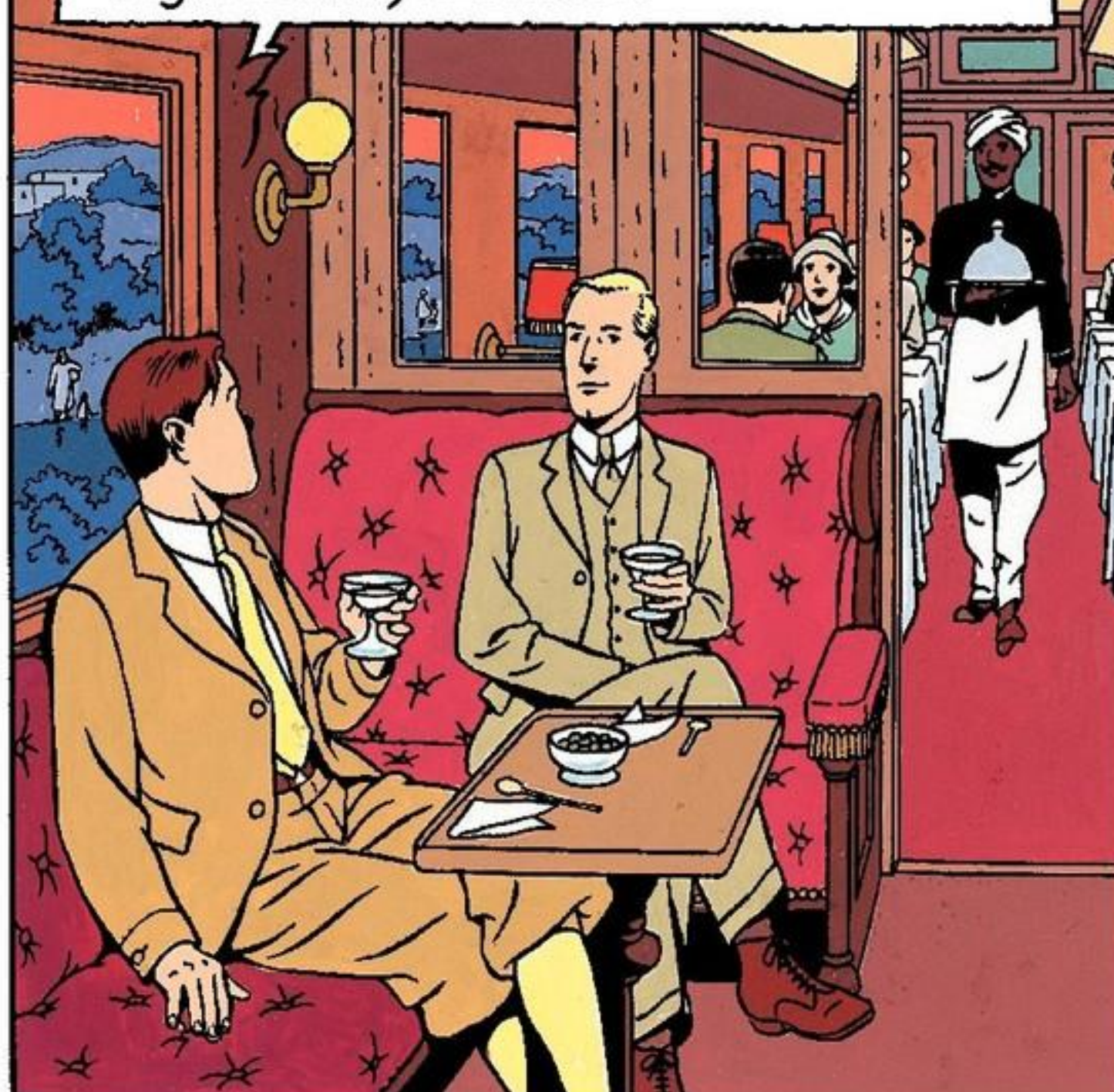
DELIGHTED, THE NEW FRIENDS SETTLE AS COMFORTABLY AS POSSIBLE IN THE TRAIN THAT WILL TAKE THEM ON A 600-MILE JOURNEY ACROSS THE CAPTIVATING BEAUTY OF INDIA.



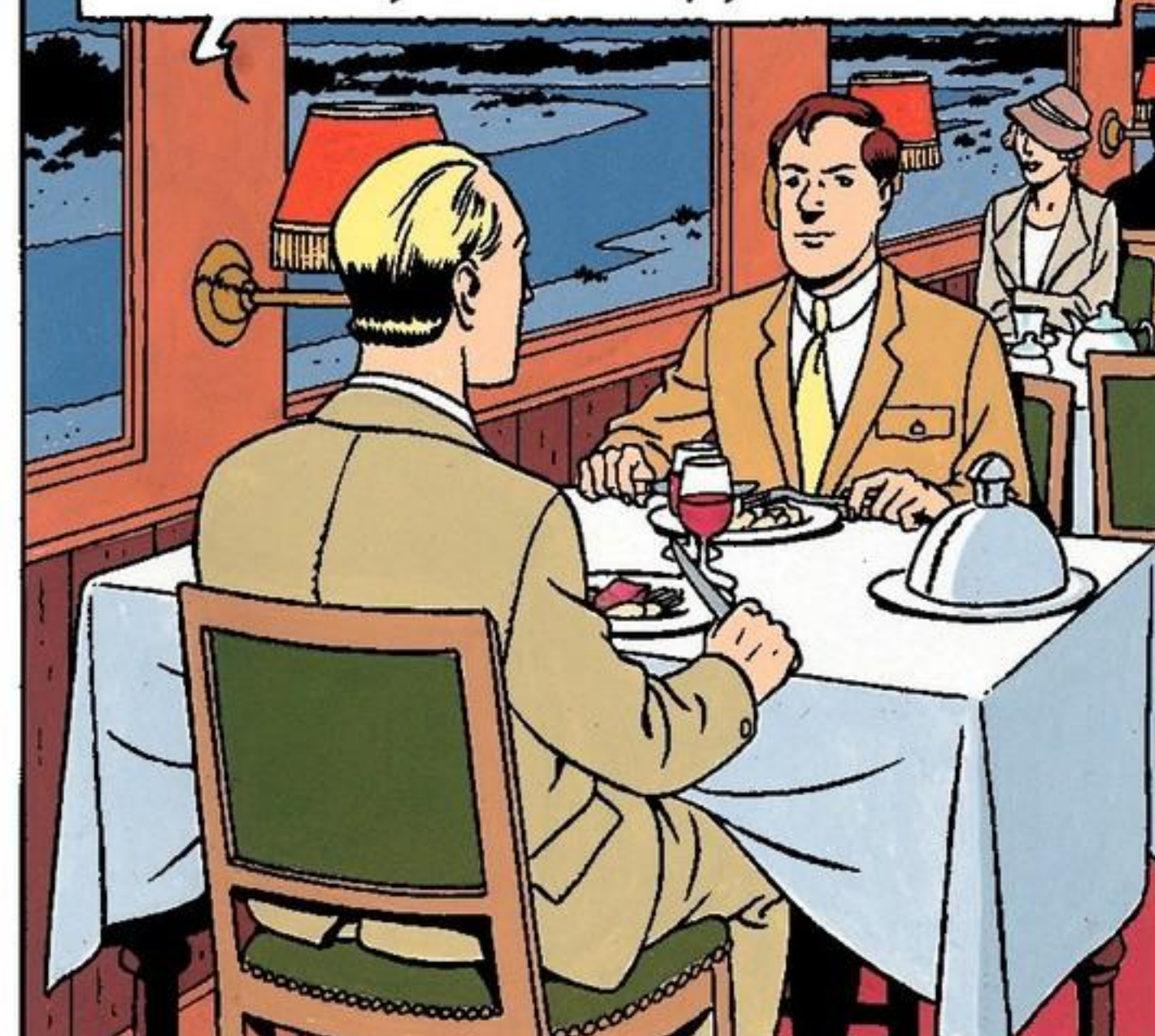
AS THEIR TRAIN STEAMS STEADILY NORTHWARDS, FRANCIS BLAKE AND PHILIP MORTIMER TALK, TALK AND TALK EVEN MORE OF THEIR AMBITIONS WITH ALL THE PASSION OF YOUTH.



Believe me, Francis. The future belongs to science. My decision is made, anyway. I want to be a part of that progress. When the year starts, I'll begin scientific studies.

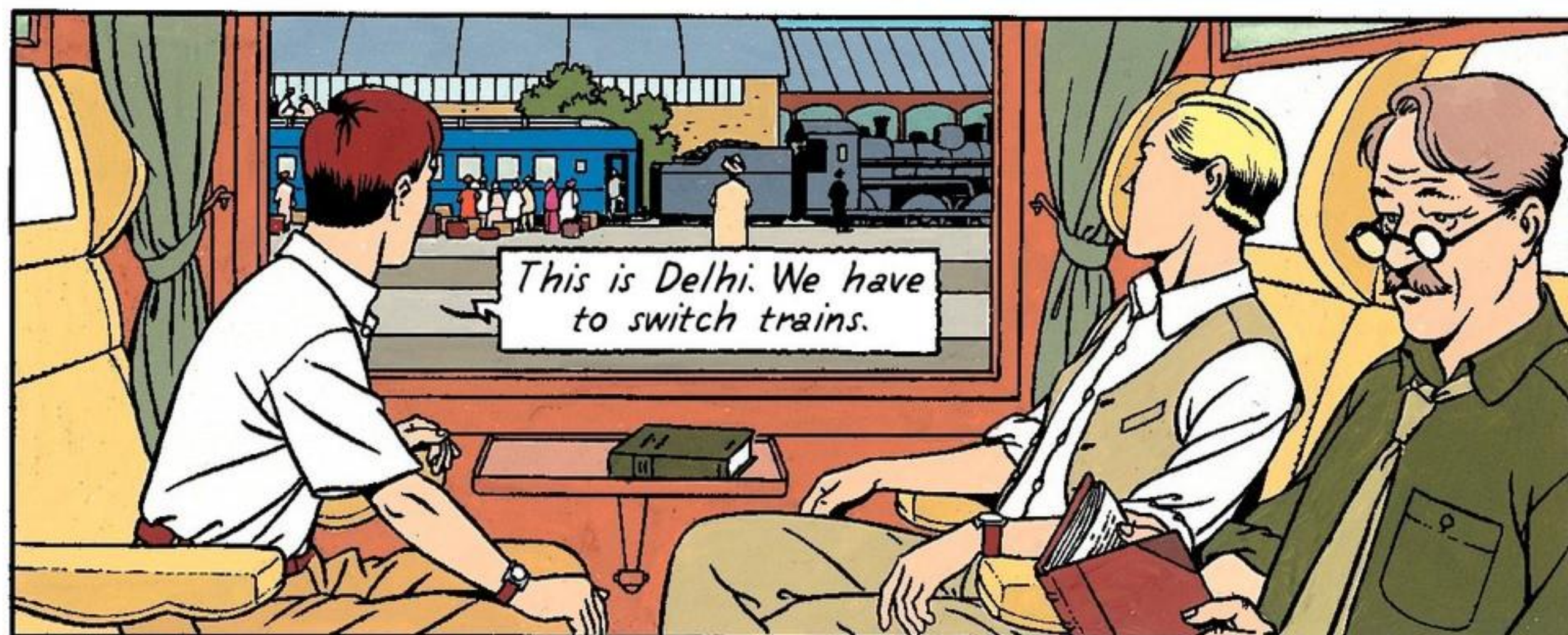


As for me, my dear Philip, I intend to join the Royal Air Force Staff College. I fear that Europe isn't ready for peace yet, unfortunately. And if need be, I would like to be able to defend our values and our civilisation as part of our armed forces, as my father does.



I have in my suitcase two bottles of my father's favourite scotch. What do you say we open one and toast our future?

I must say, it sounds like a jolly good idea!



This is Delhi. We have to switch trains.

A FEW HOURS LATER, OUR FRIENDS' TRAIN HAS STOPPED IN AMBALA'S STATION.

And this is where our paths diverge. Once again, a million thanks for your intervention in Bombay.

Think no more of it, will you? Travelling in your company was a real pleasure. Make sure you don't lose my address, and... enjoy your stay in India, my dear Francis.



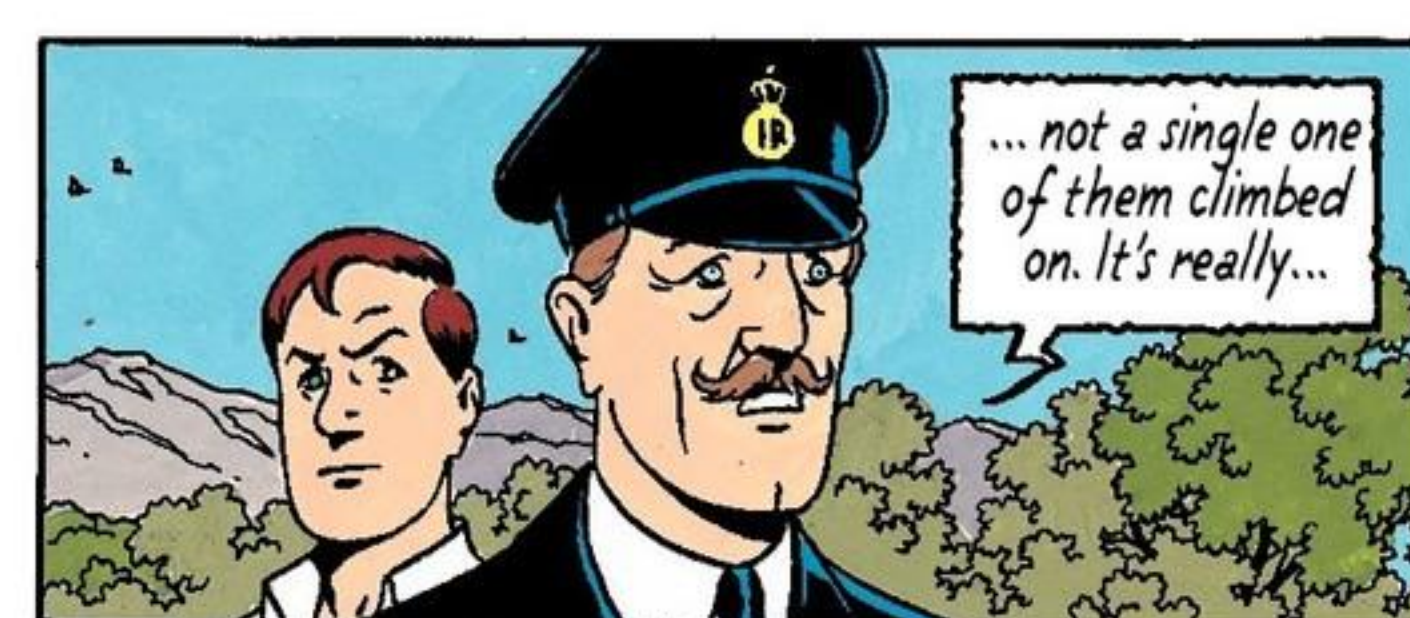
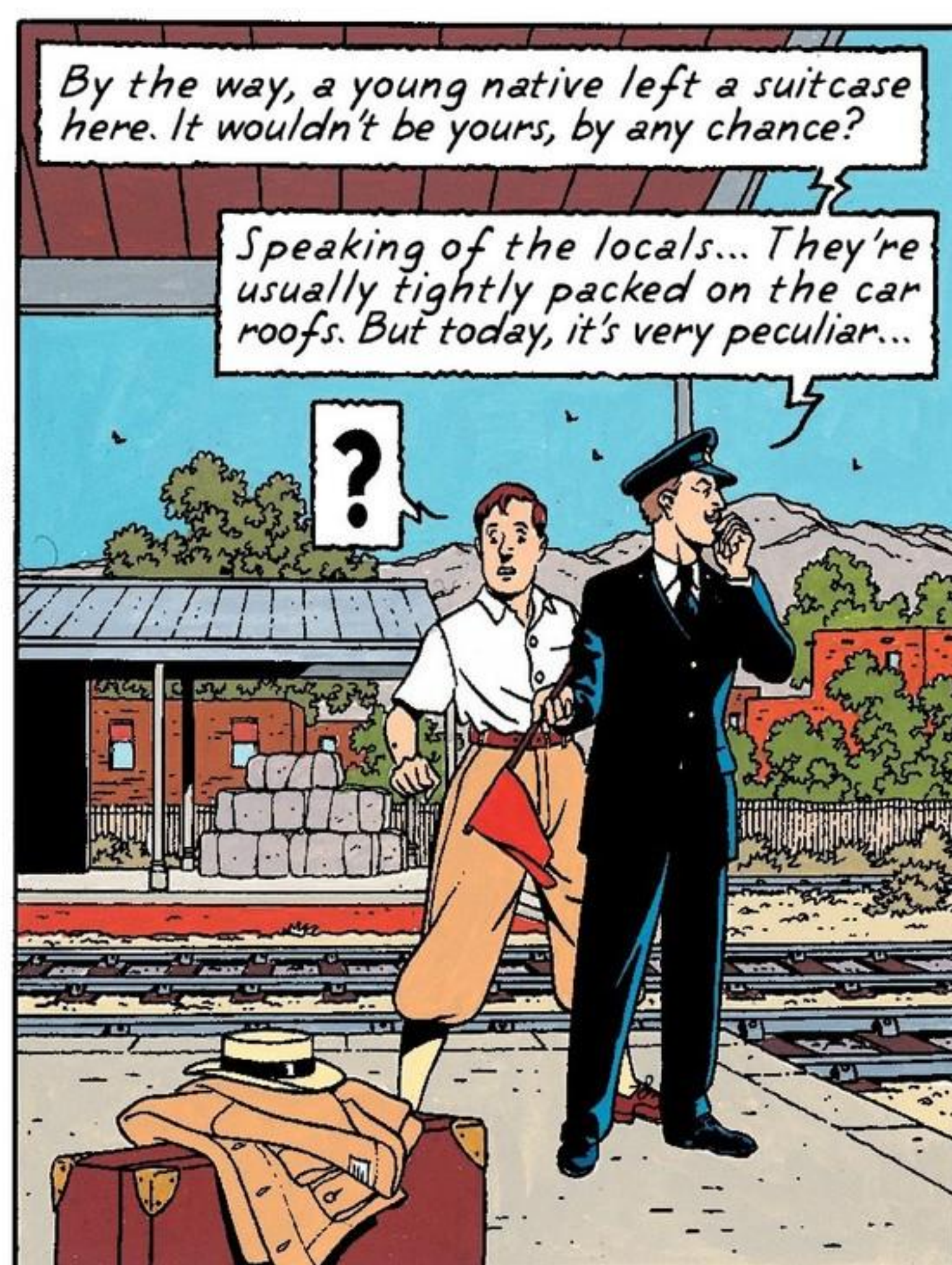
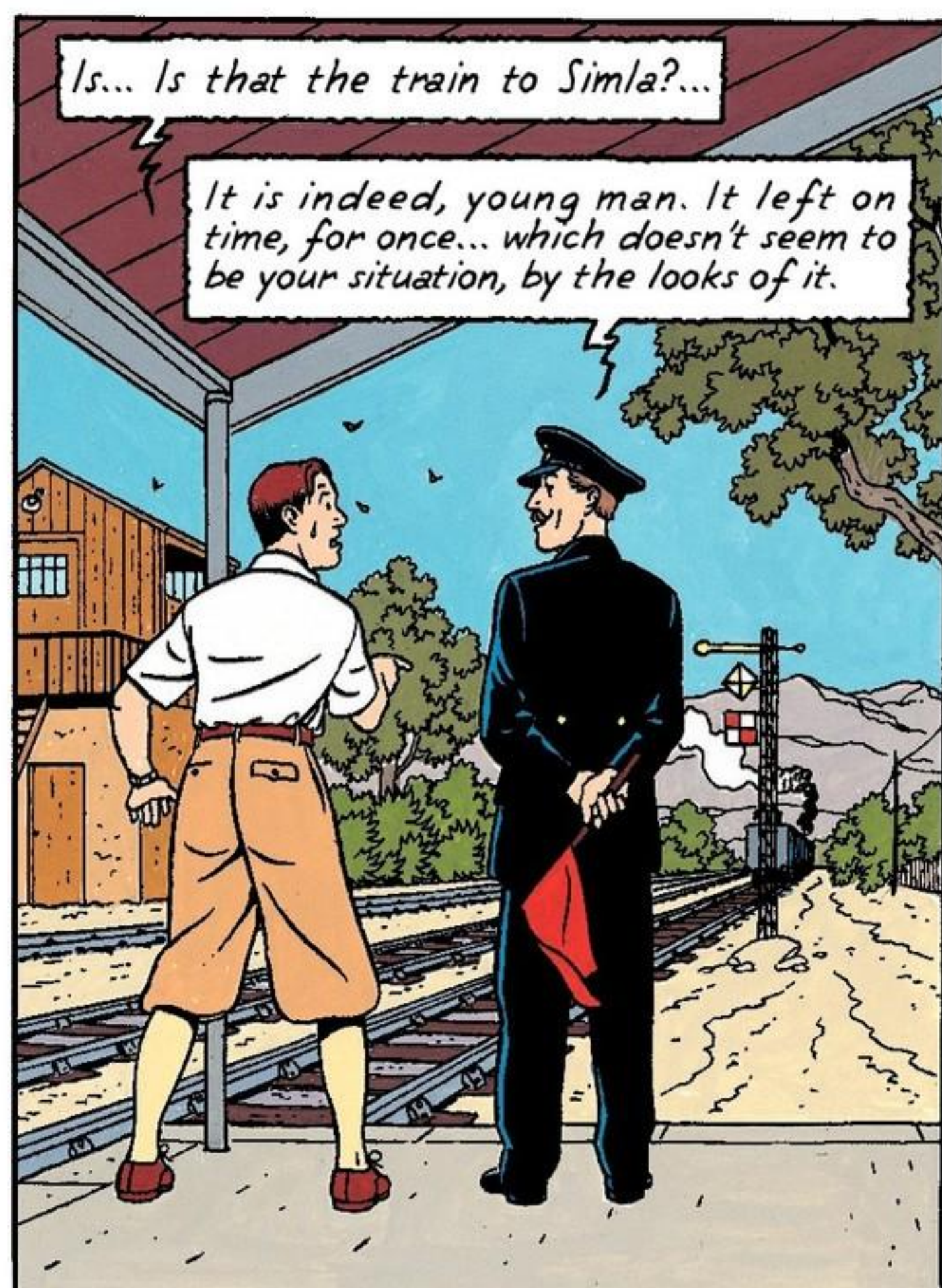
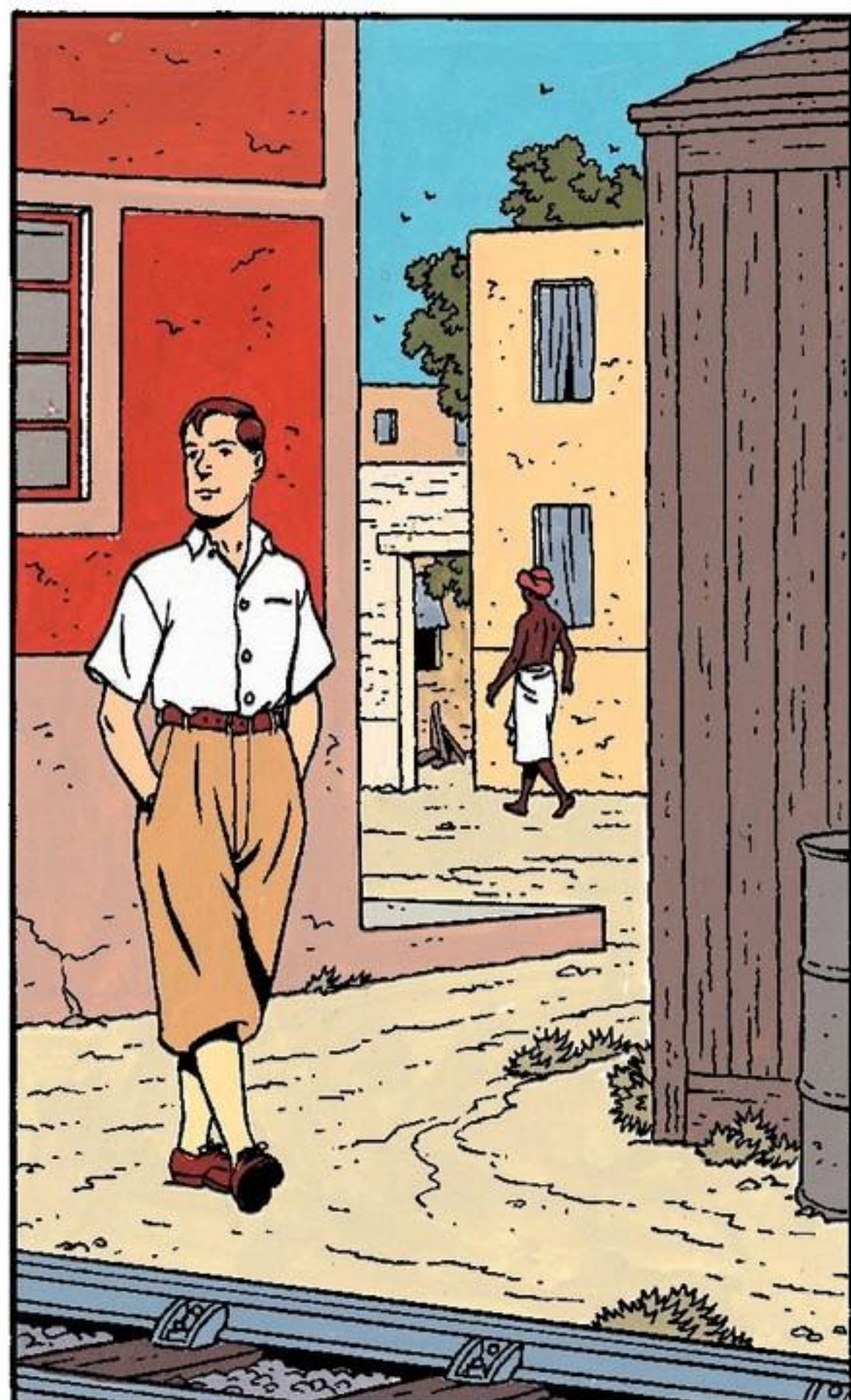
Feels like this trip has given me some serious aches. I think a 15-minute walk is in order to stretch my legs.

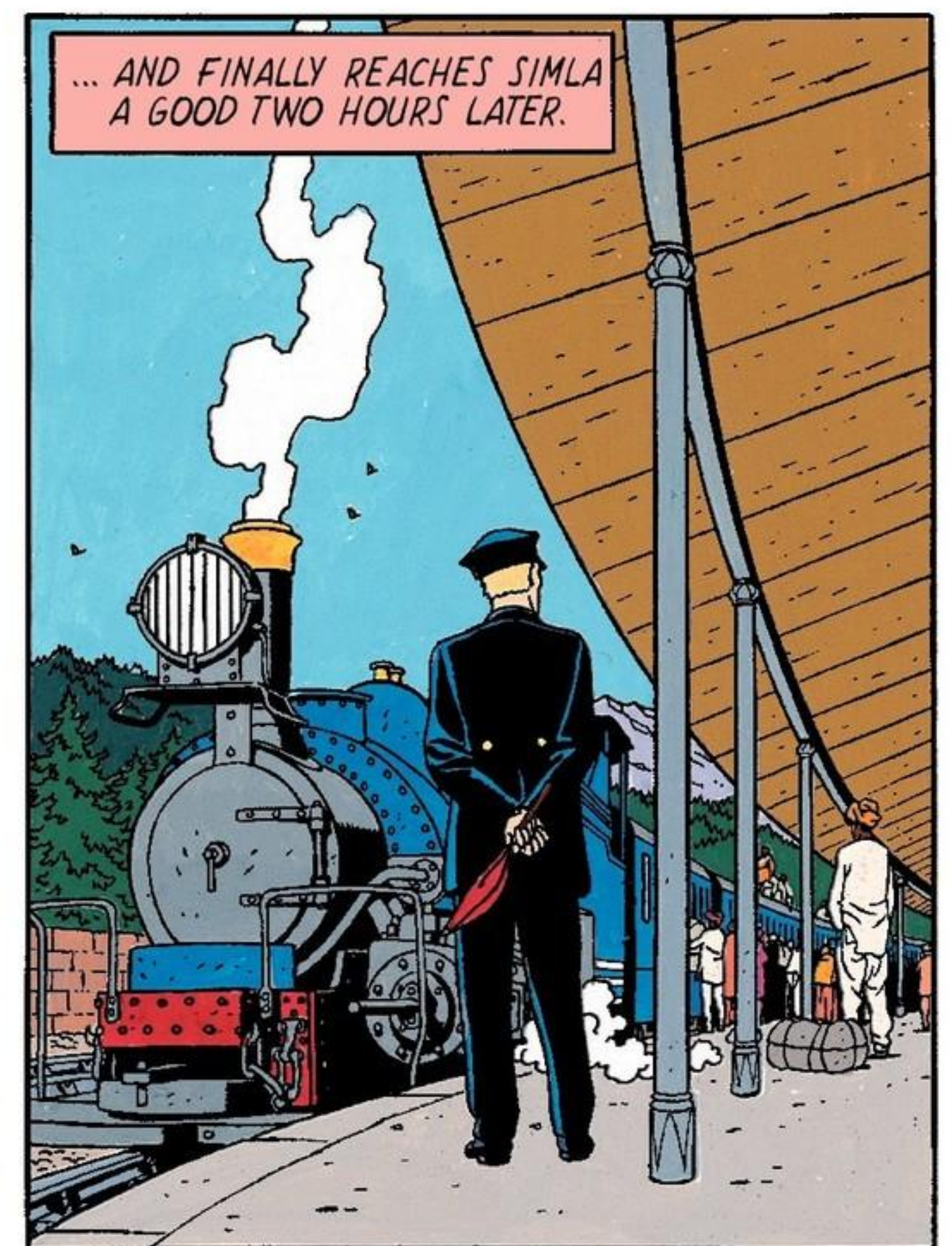
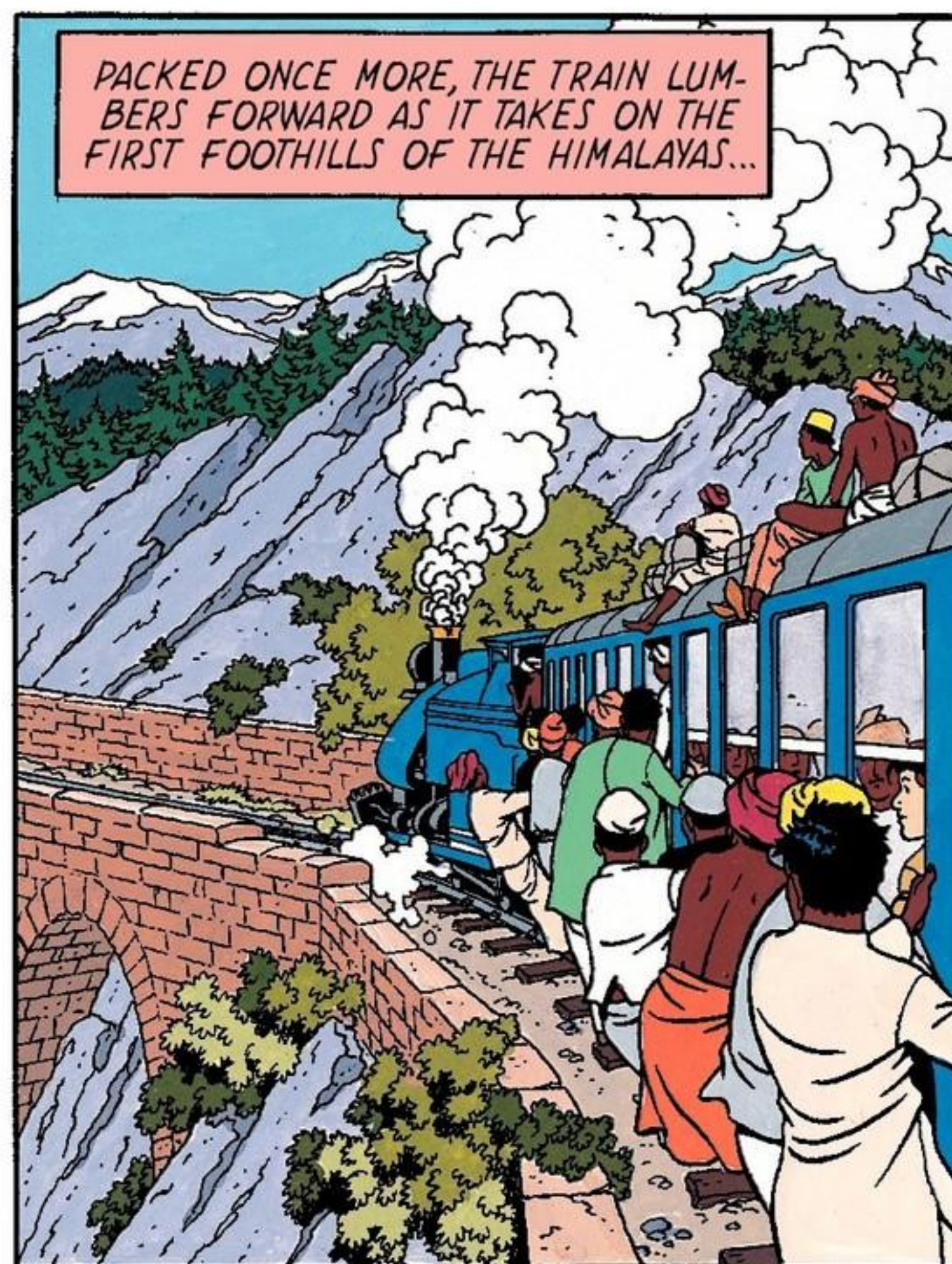
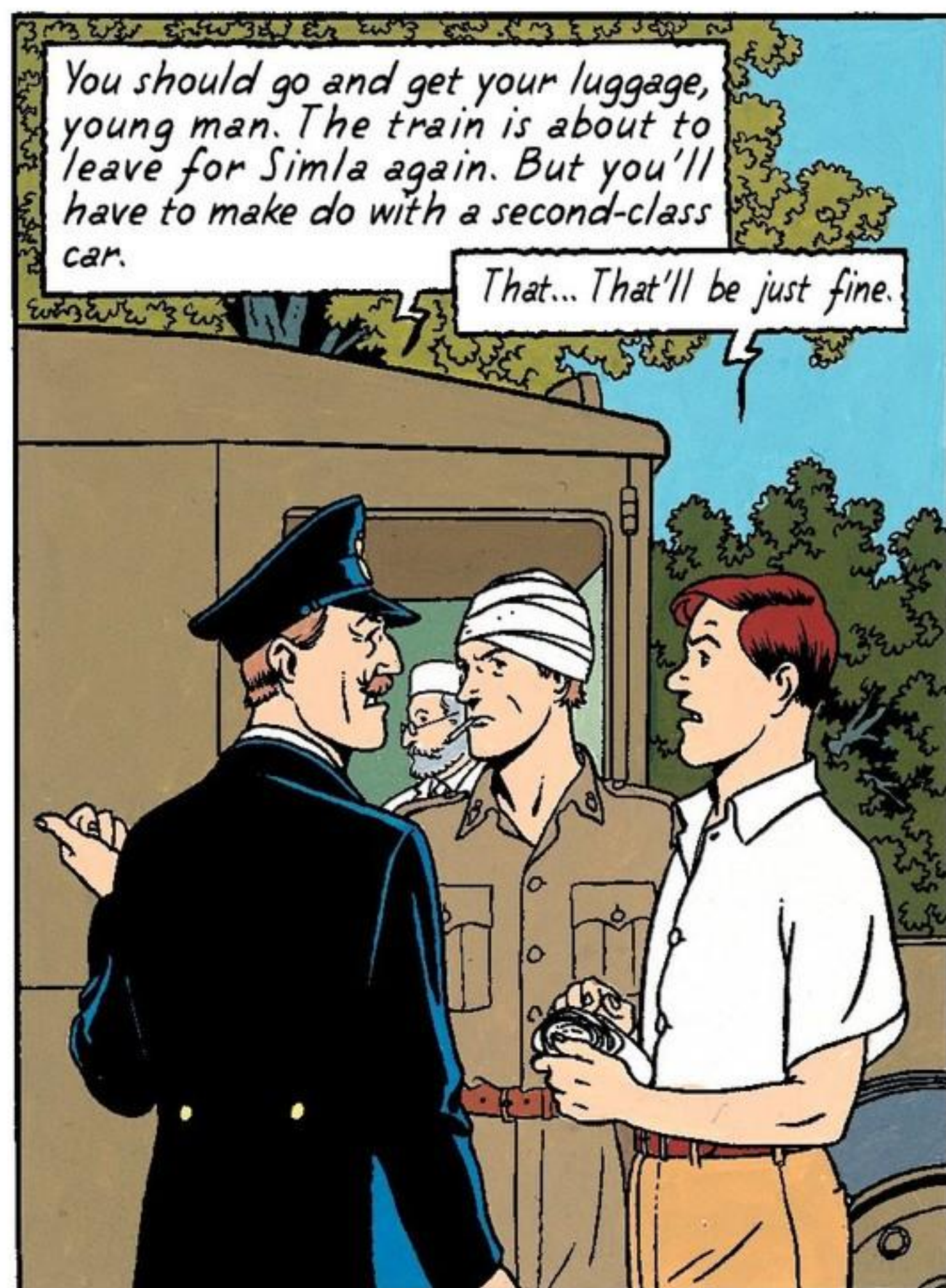
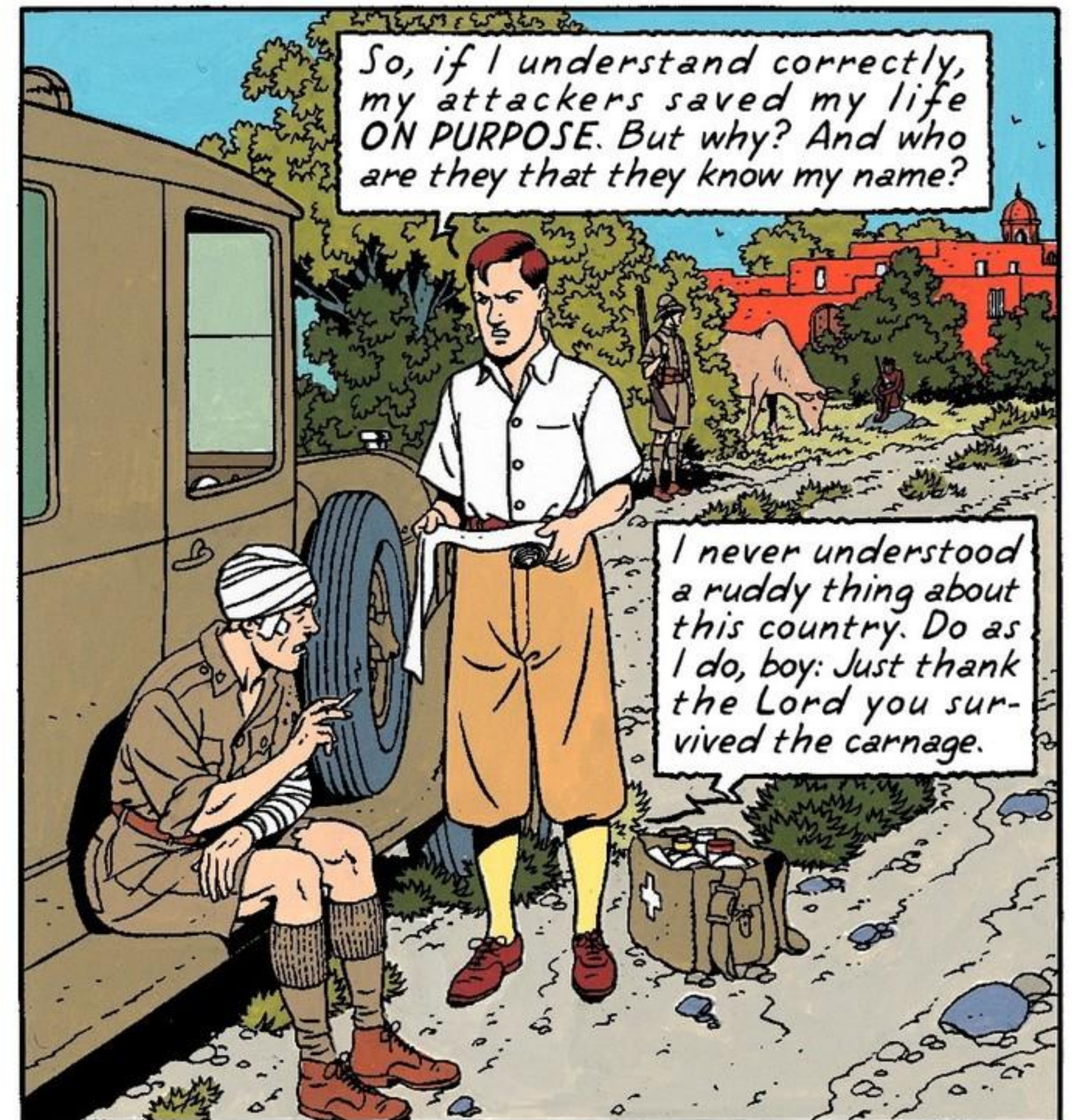
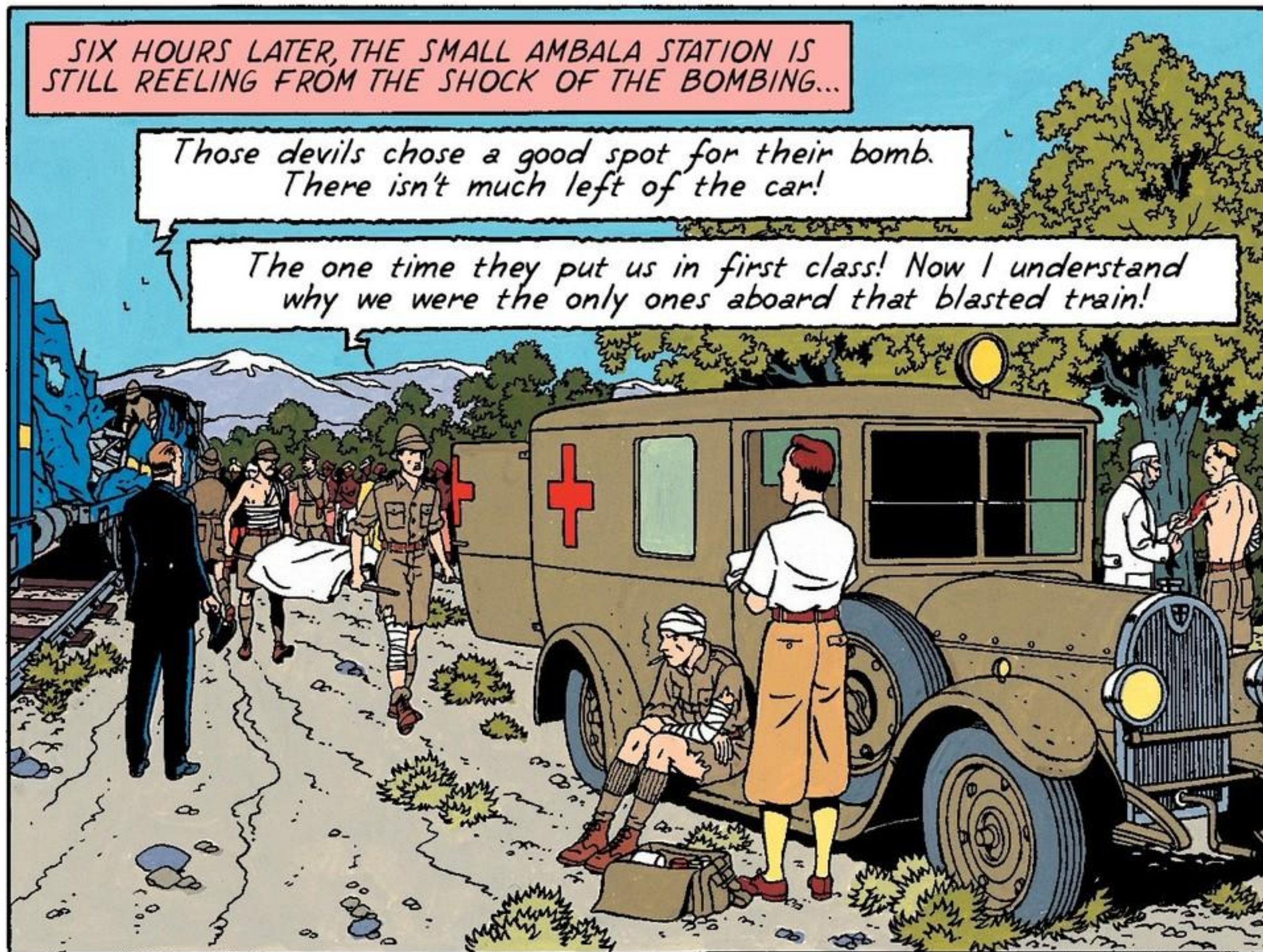


Him? Here?

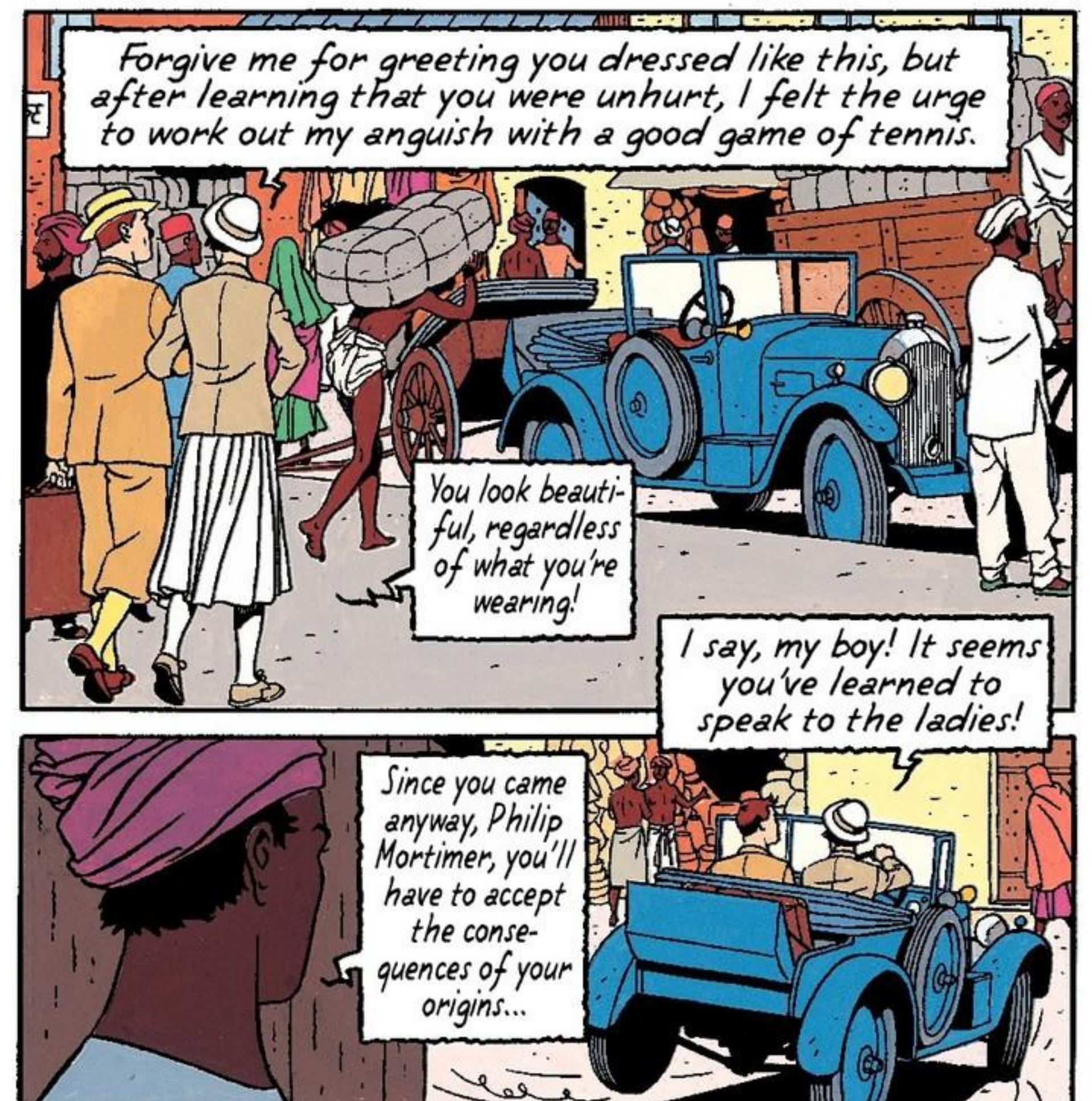
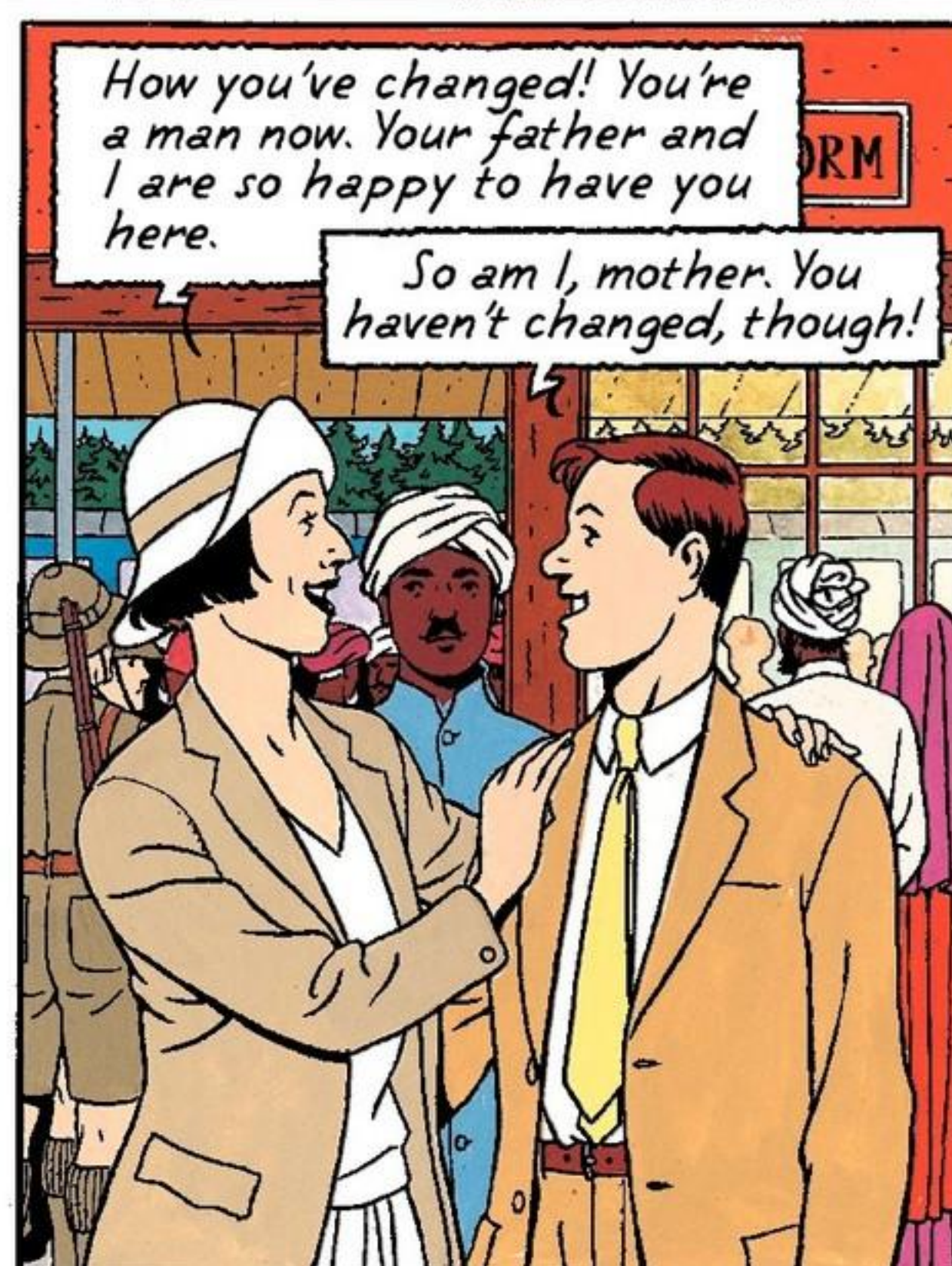
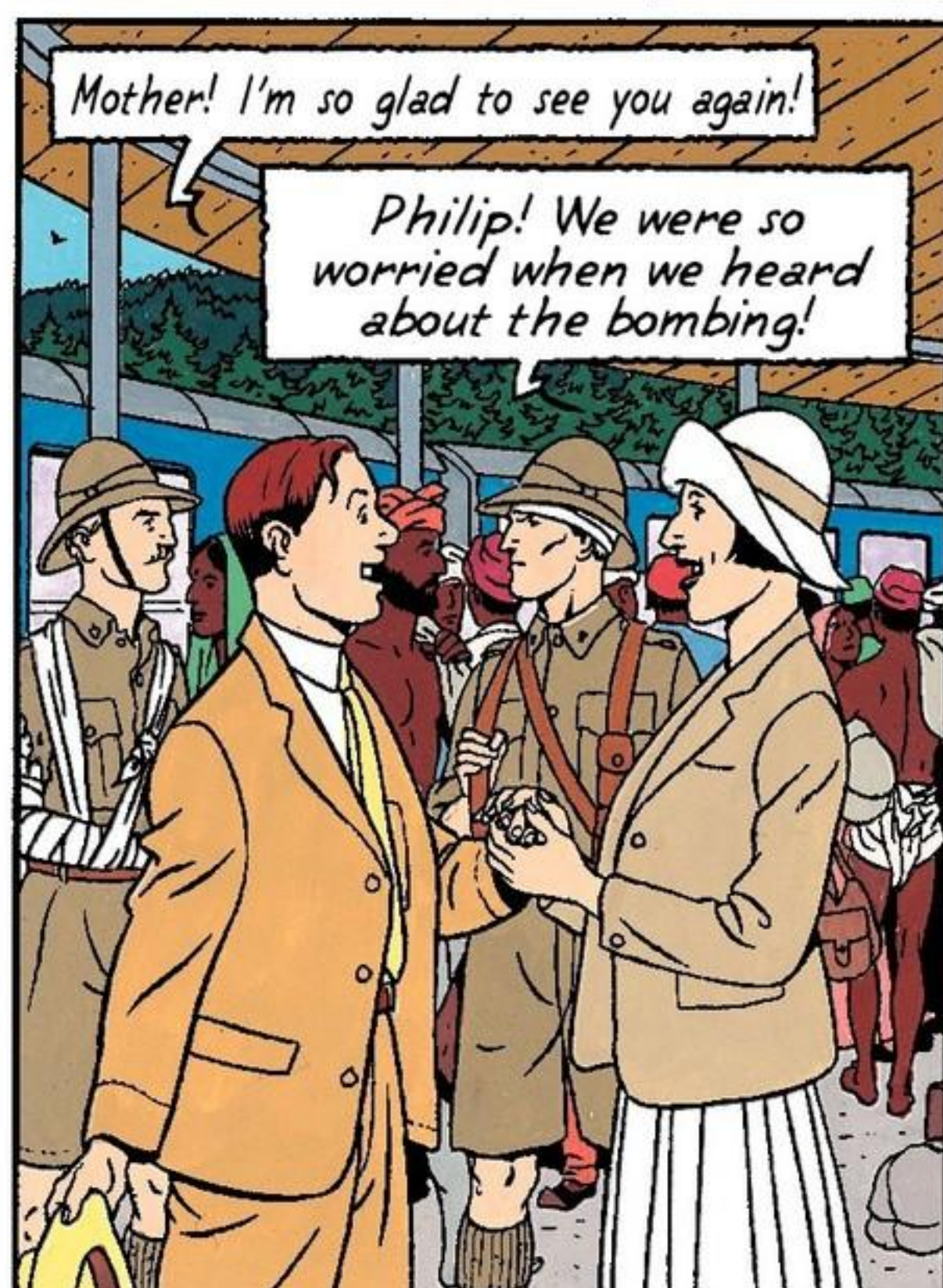
He must be going to his parents'... Which means... he'll get back on the train. I must do something.

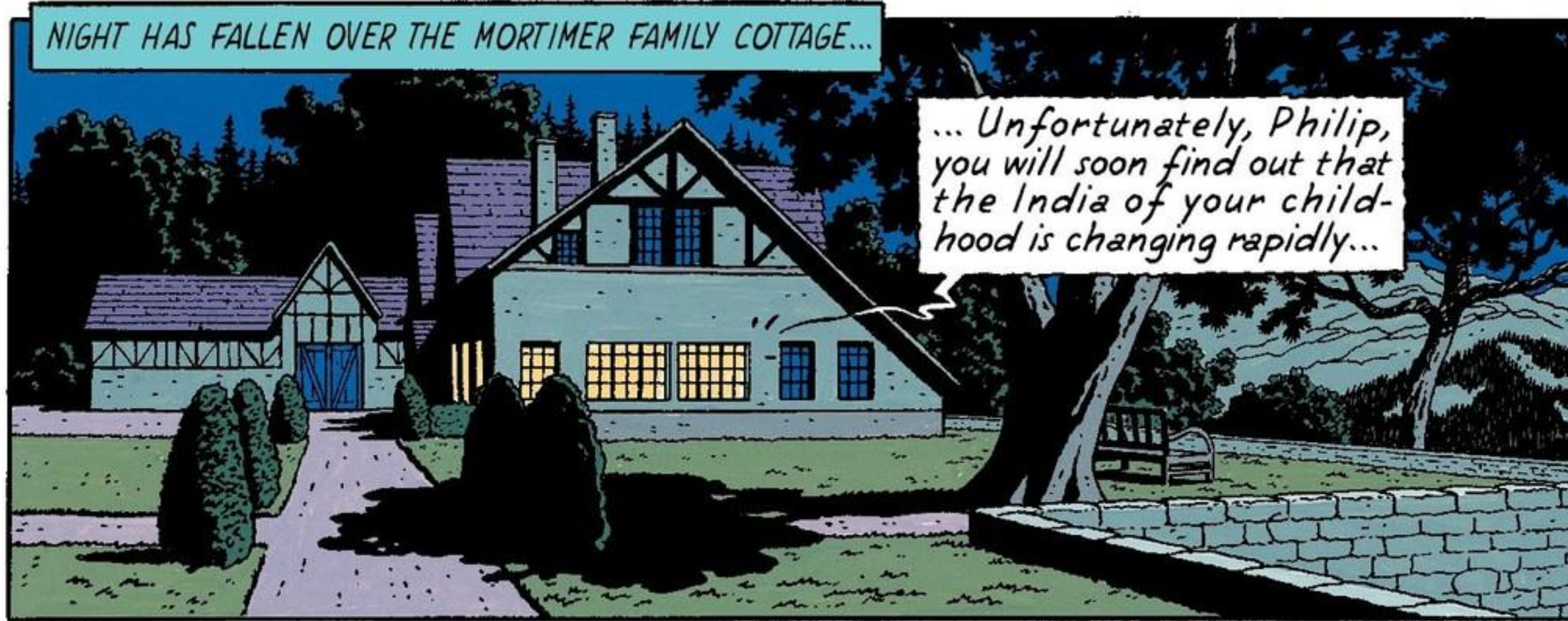




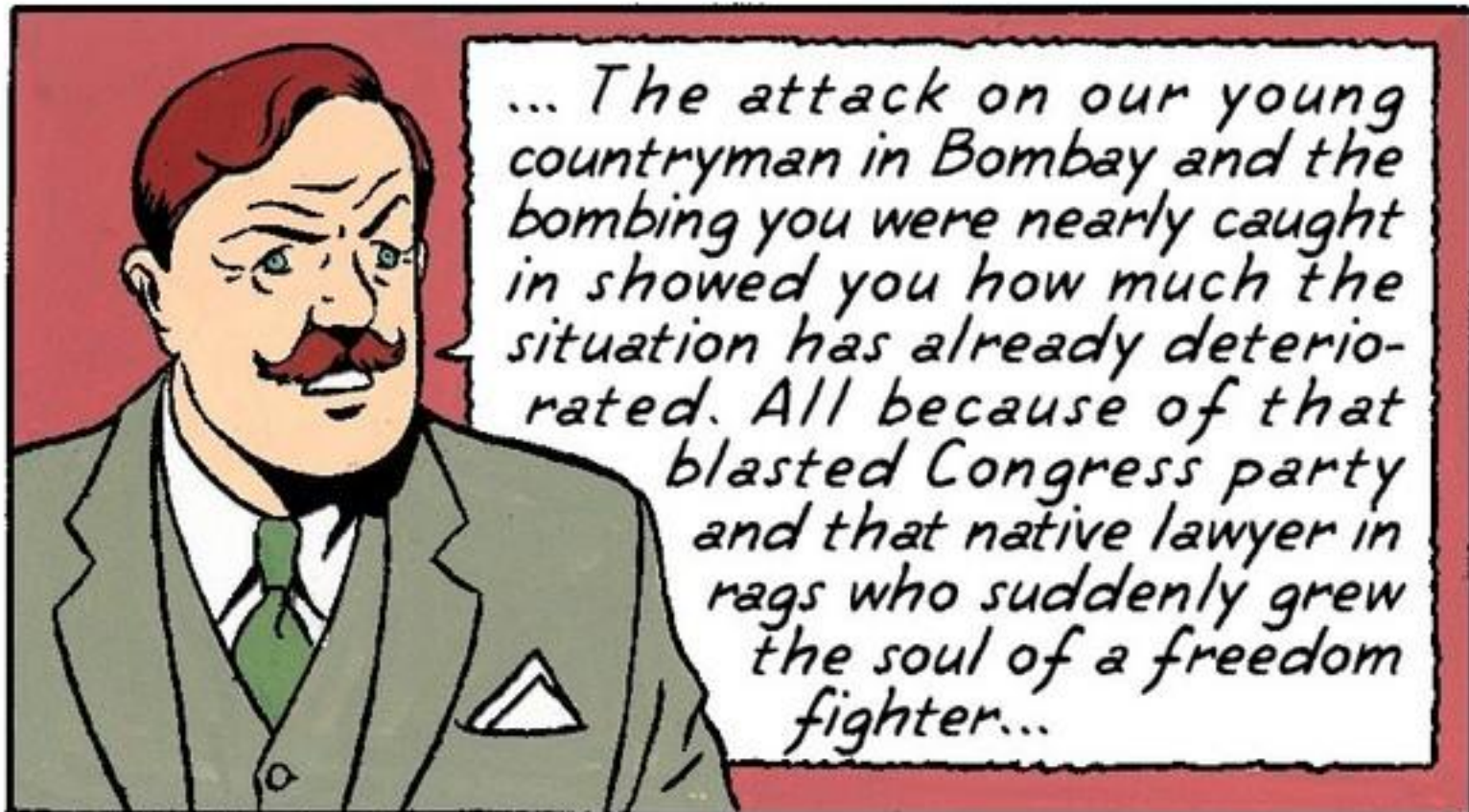


ON THE PLATFORM OF THE SMALL STATION, LADY EILEEN HUNTER OF PITLOCHRY—RENNOWED THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE BRITISH COLONY AS MUCH FOR HER SPONTANEOUS NATURE AS FOR HER INDISPUTABLE TALENT AS A PIANIST—GREETES HER ONLY SON WITH UNRESERVED JOY.





... Unfortunately, Philip, you will soon find out that the India of your childhood is changing rapidly...

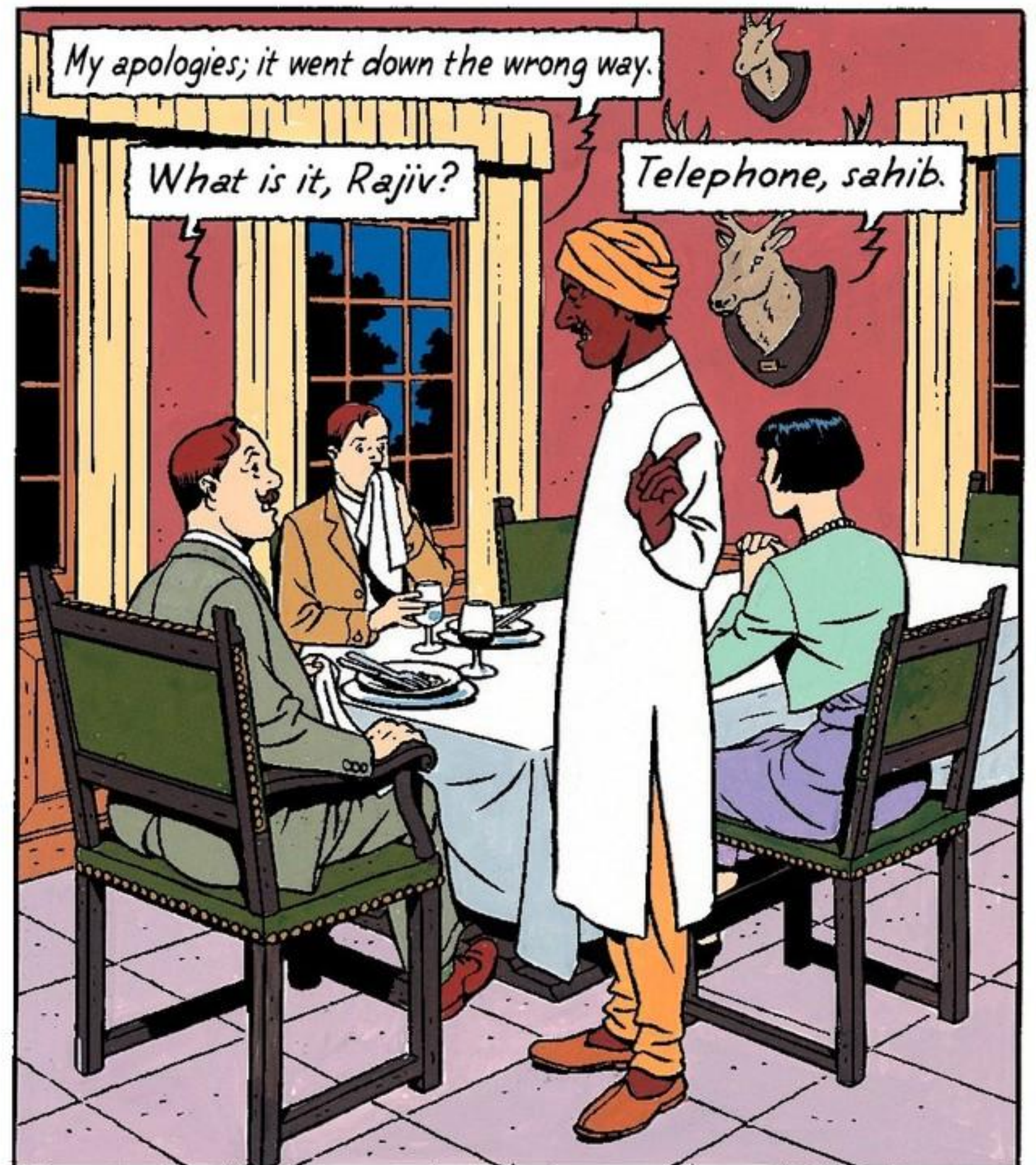


... The attack on our young countryman in Bombay and the bombing you were nearly caught in showed you how much the situation has already deteriorated. All because of that blasted Congress party and that native lawyer in rags who suddenly grew the soul of a freedom fighter...



What's his name again, that tiny bespectacled character? Oh, yes! That's right. Gandhi! Mahatma Gandhi!

GRGL!



My apologies; it went down the wrong way.

What is it, Rajiv?

Telephone, sahib.

SO, THE MYSTERIOUS SAVIOUR OF BOMBAY WAS NONE OTHER THAN BRITISH INDIA'S NUMBER-ONE PUBLIC SUBVERSIVE! YOUNG PHILIP MORTIMER ISN'T SURE IF HE SHOULD BE TELLING HIS FATHER ABOUT THAT DETAIL, OR ABOUT THE MYSTERIOUS MESSAGE AT AMBALA STATION, EITHER.



I wonder who could be calling at this hour. I'll meet you in the lounge.



Tell me, Mother, do you remember Sushil, my childhood friend? Have you heard anything from him?

How could I have forgotten Sushil, Philip? You were inseparable. Like brothers!



... However, it might be better if you didn't try to see him again. You heard your father. The situation is tense, and we heard that Sushil joined a group of independence activists who want to chase off the British from here without negotiations.



But... That's ridiculous!... Sushil was my best friend! He can't possibly have forgotten all...



Shhh! Your father's coming. Please, my boy, forget Sushil.



It was a call from Colonel Blake, the father of that young man you helped in Bombay. He wanted to congratulate me on my son's bravery. This is the kind of compliment that can only delight a father. I'm sure your mother shares my pride!

Er... Thank you, Father.



Now, tell us: What are your plans for the future?

Well, Father, I'm now certain that my path leads to scientific endeavours.



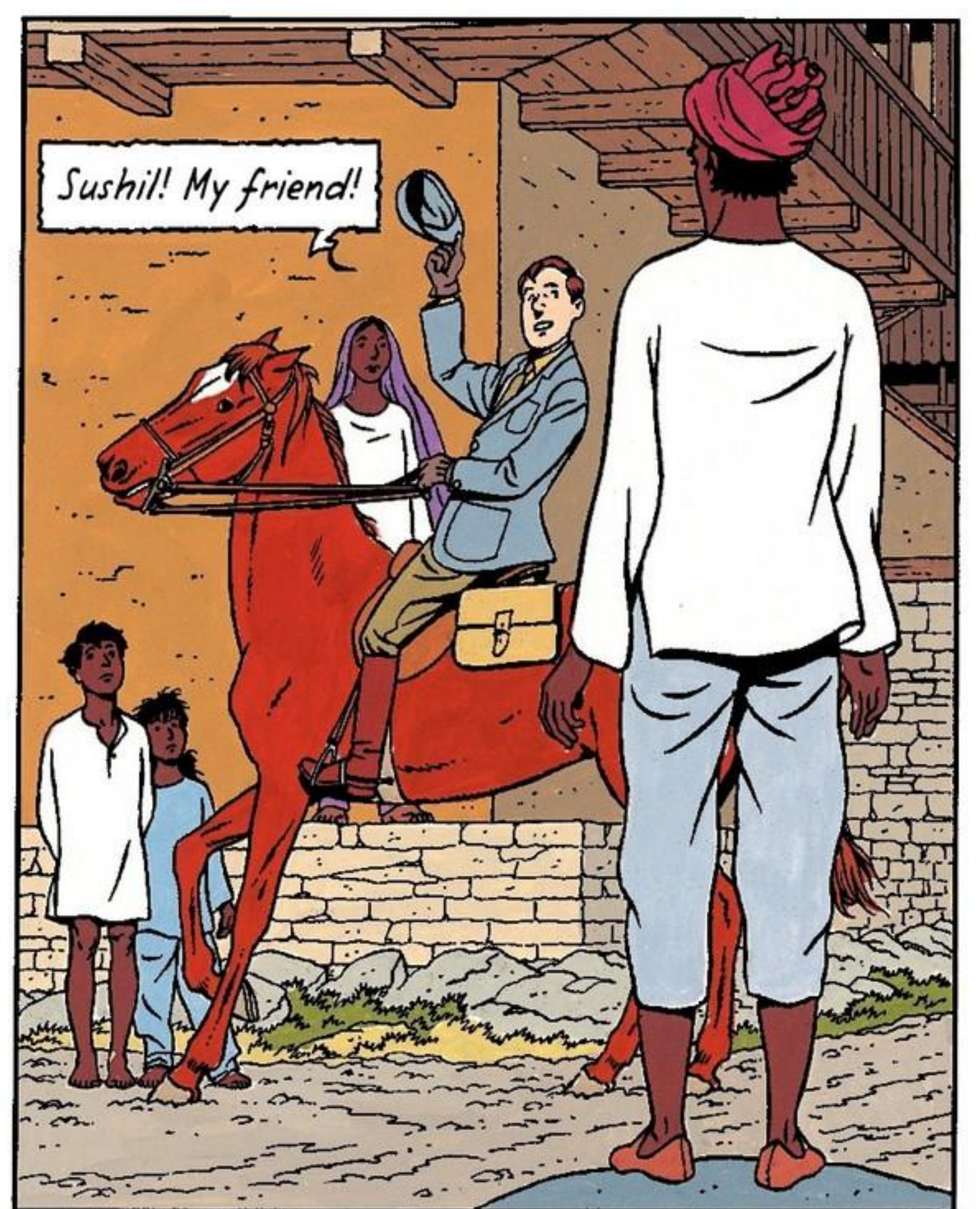
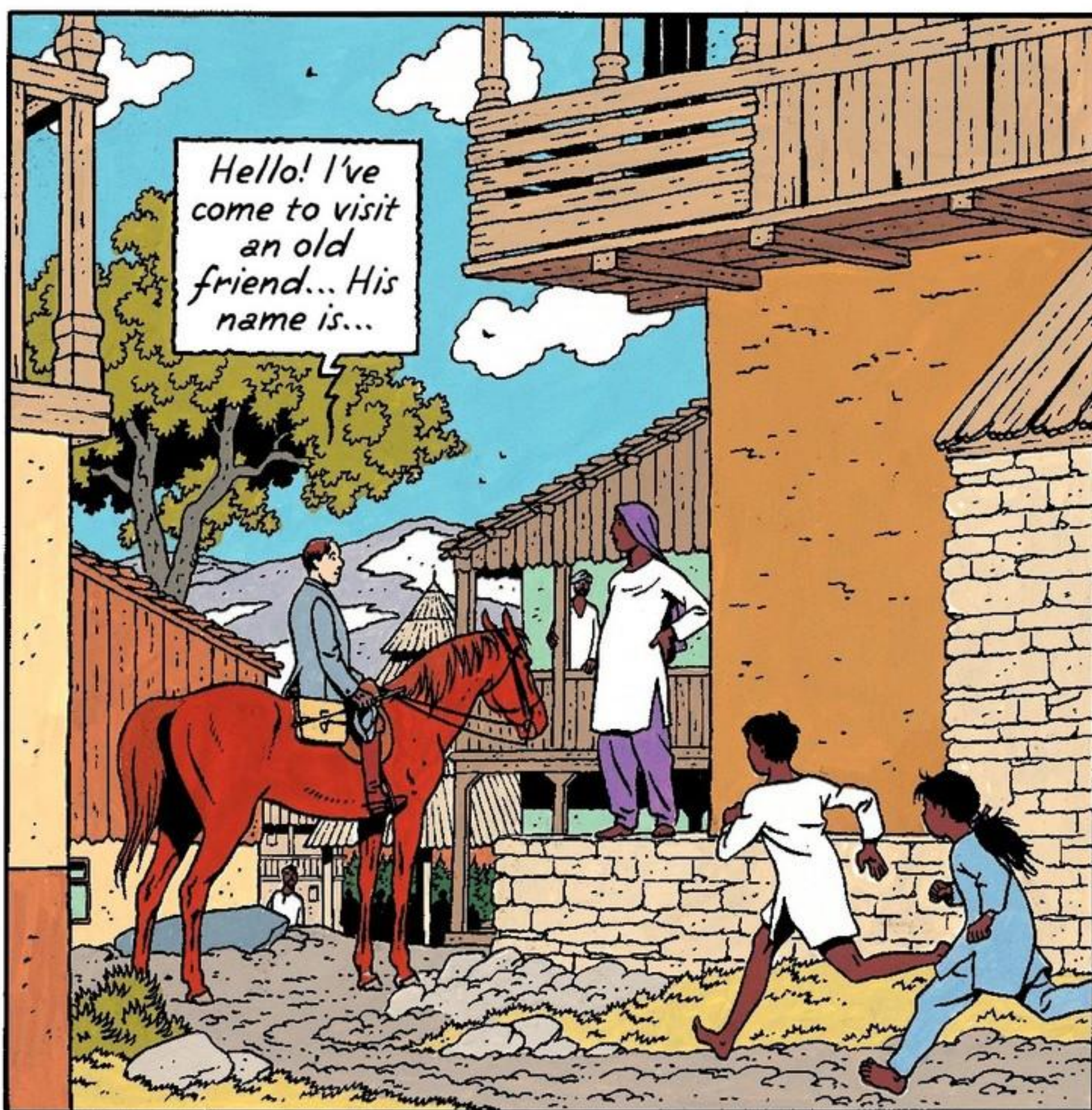
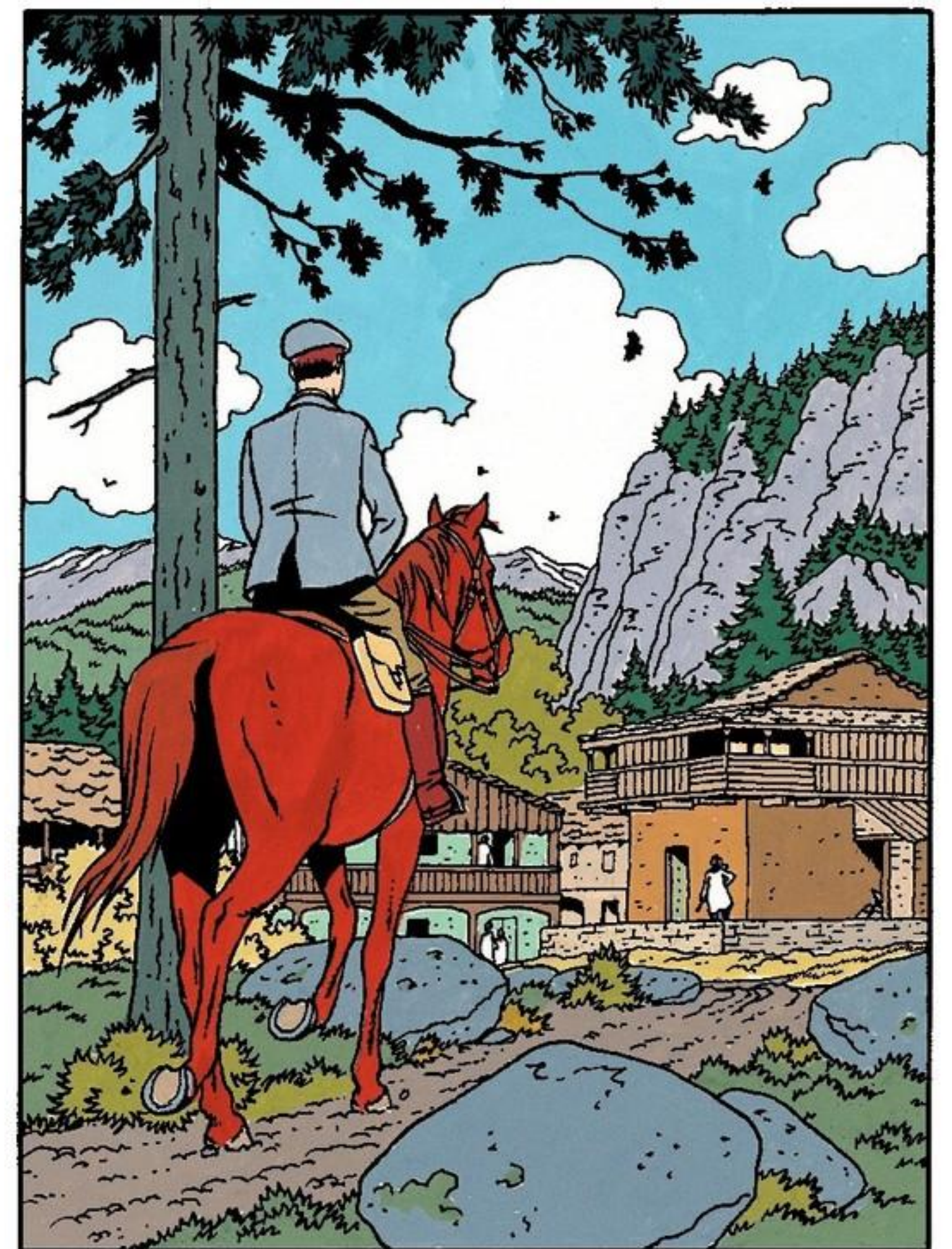
Do you hear that, my dear? Are we witnessing the birth of a long line of doctors among the Mortimers?

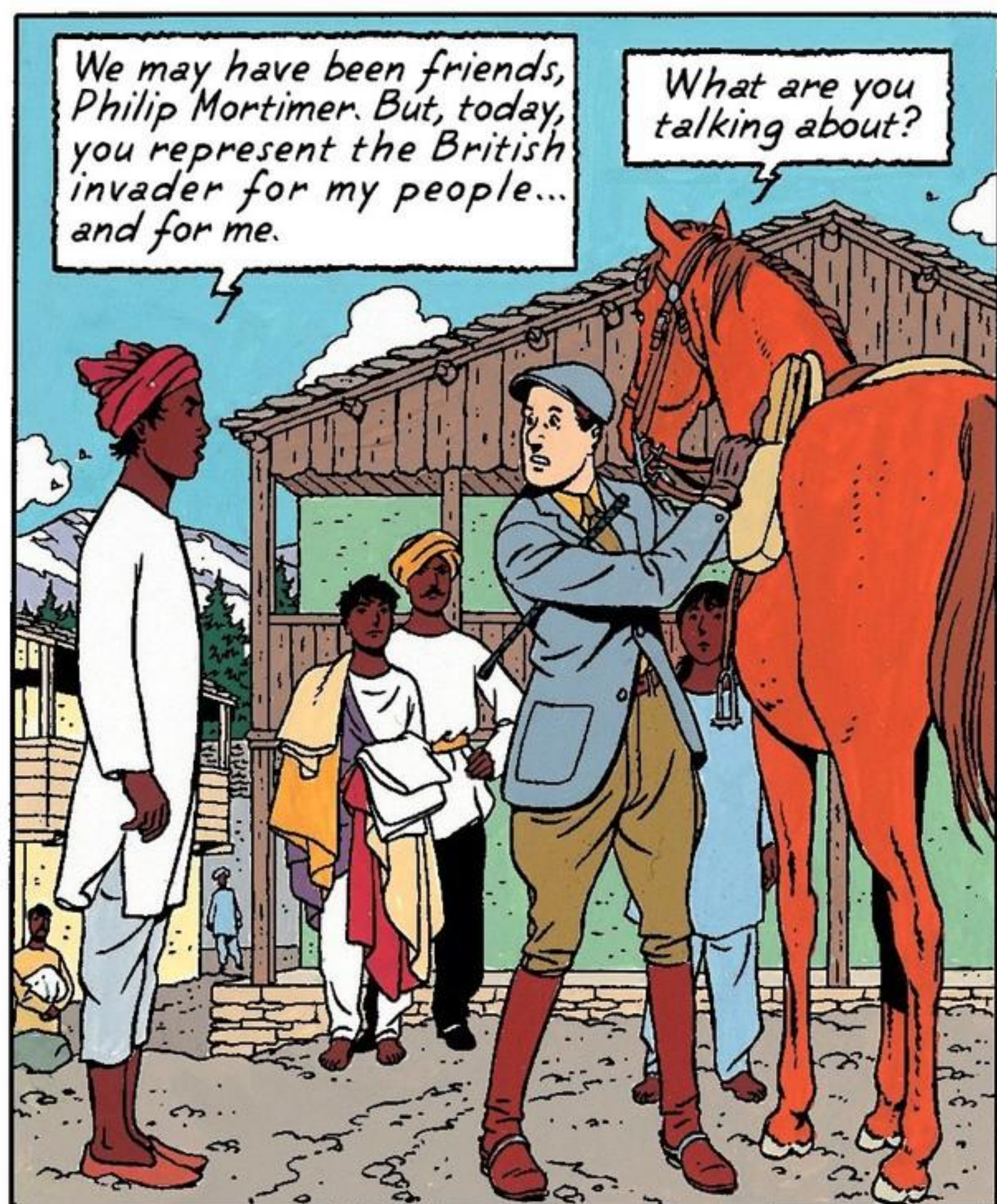
Er... My interest is more along the lines of research. I'm especially interested in physics.



How fascinating! Tell us more, Philip!

THE EVENING ENDED LATE AT THE MORTIMERS, AS THE PARENTS PROUDLY DISCOVERED THEIR SON'S PASSION AND READINESS TO GRASP HIS FUTURE WITH BOTH HANDS!





We may have been friends, Philip Mortimer. But, today, you represent the British invader for my people... and for me.

What are you talking about?



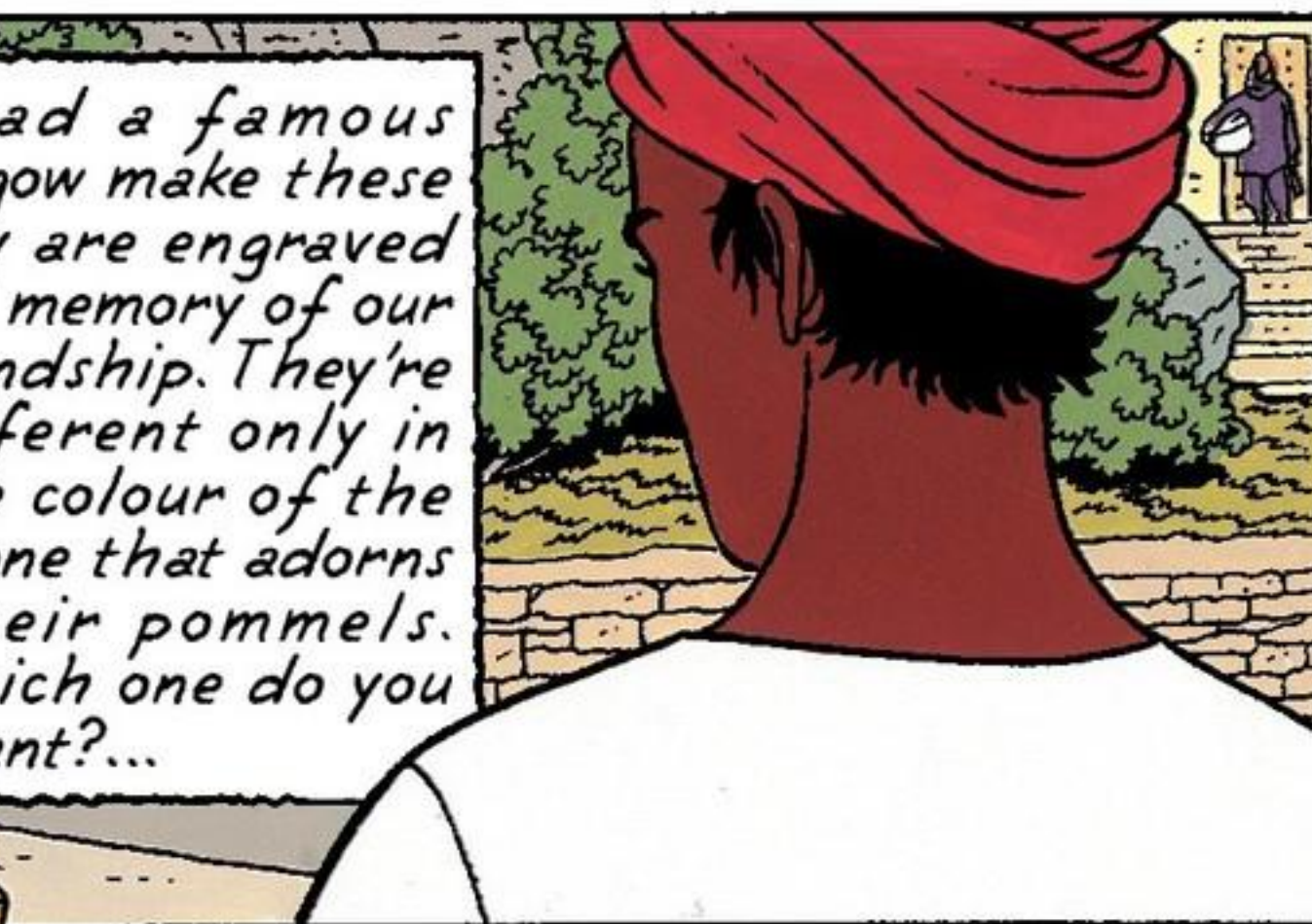
Look at what I brought you from Scotland. Do you remember my promise, on the day I left?



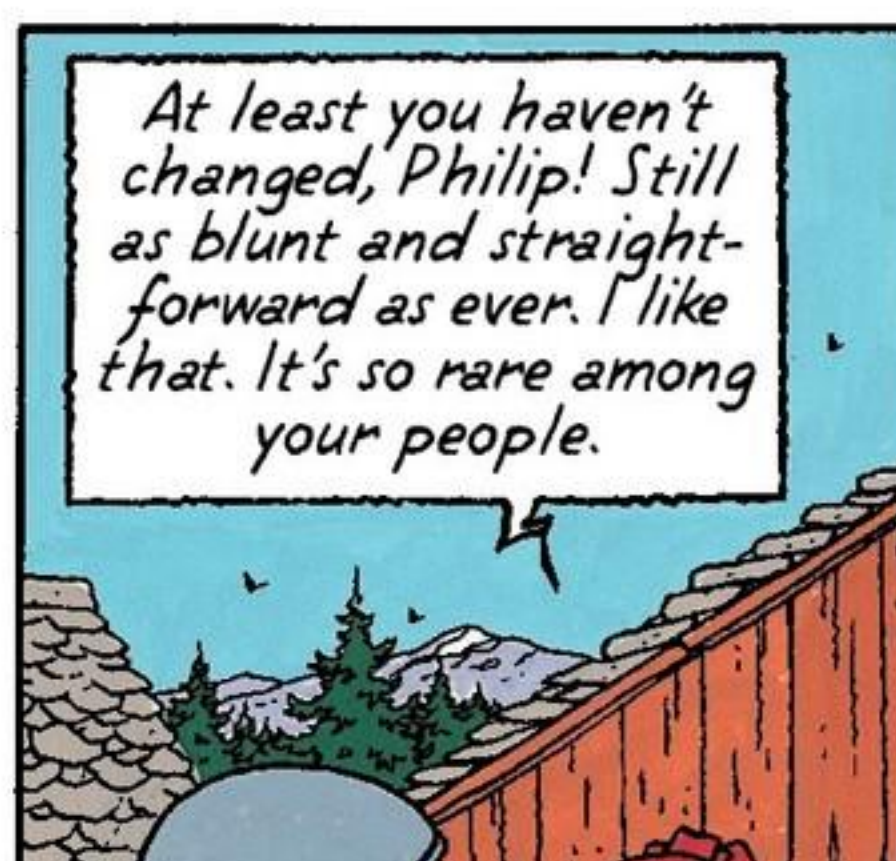
"I'll come back, Sushil. I'll come back with a bit of my Scotland, to thank you for all of your India that you gave me." As you can see, I remember.



Well, look! I had a famous armourer of Glasgow make these two daggers. They are engraved with our names, in memory of our friendship. They're different only in the colour of the stone that adorns their pommels. Which one do you want?...



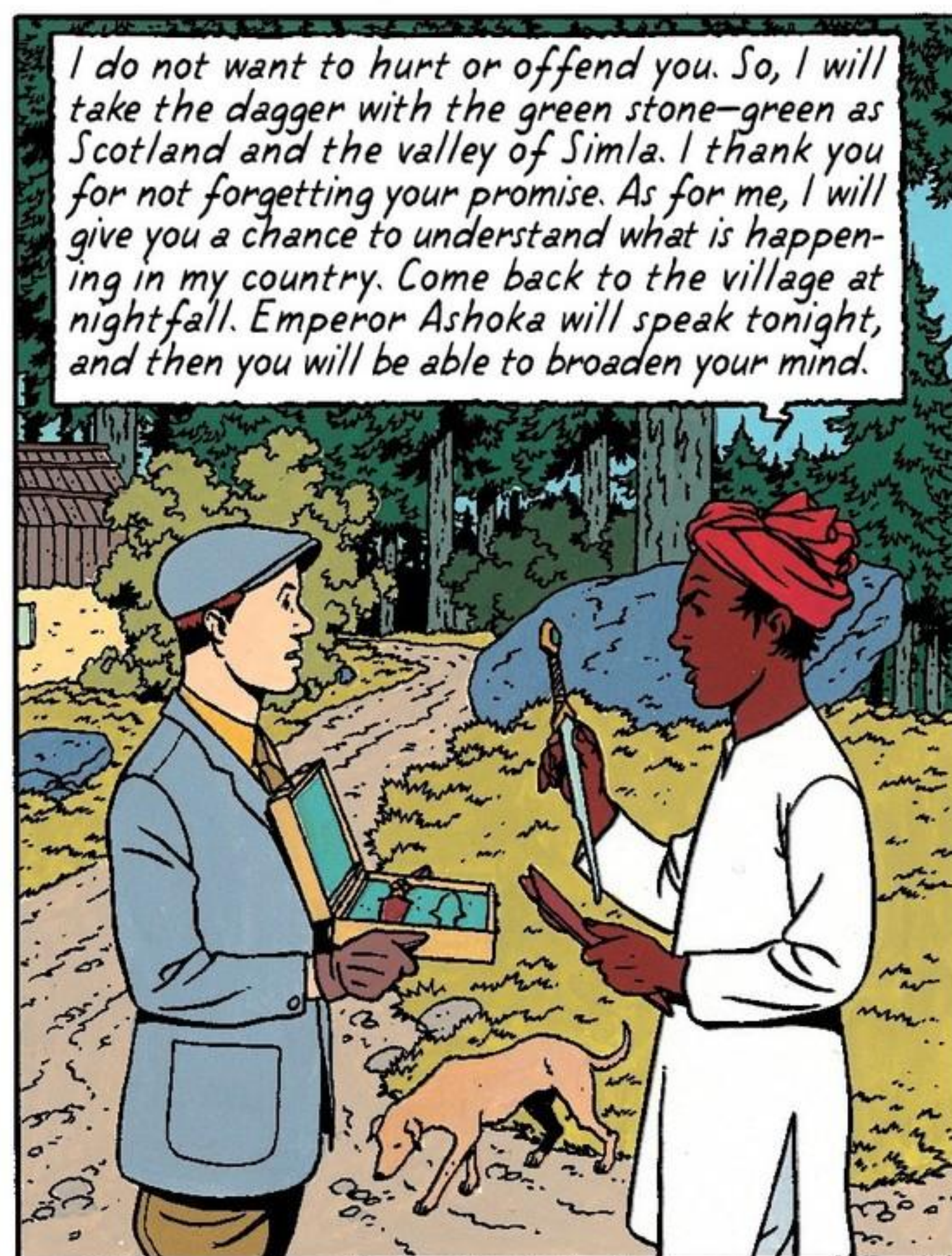
Philip, you don't understand. Things have changed. I don't want...



At least you haven't changed, Philip! Still as blunt and straightforward as ever. I like that. It's so rare among your people.



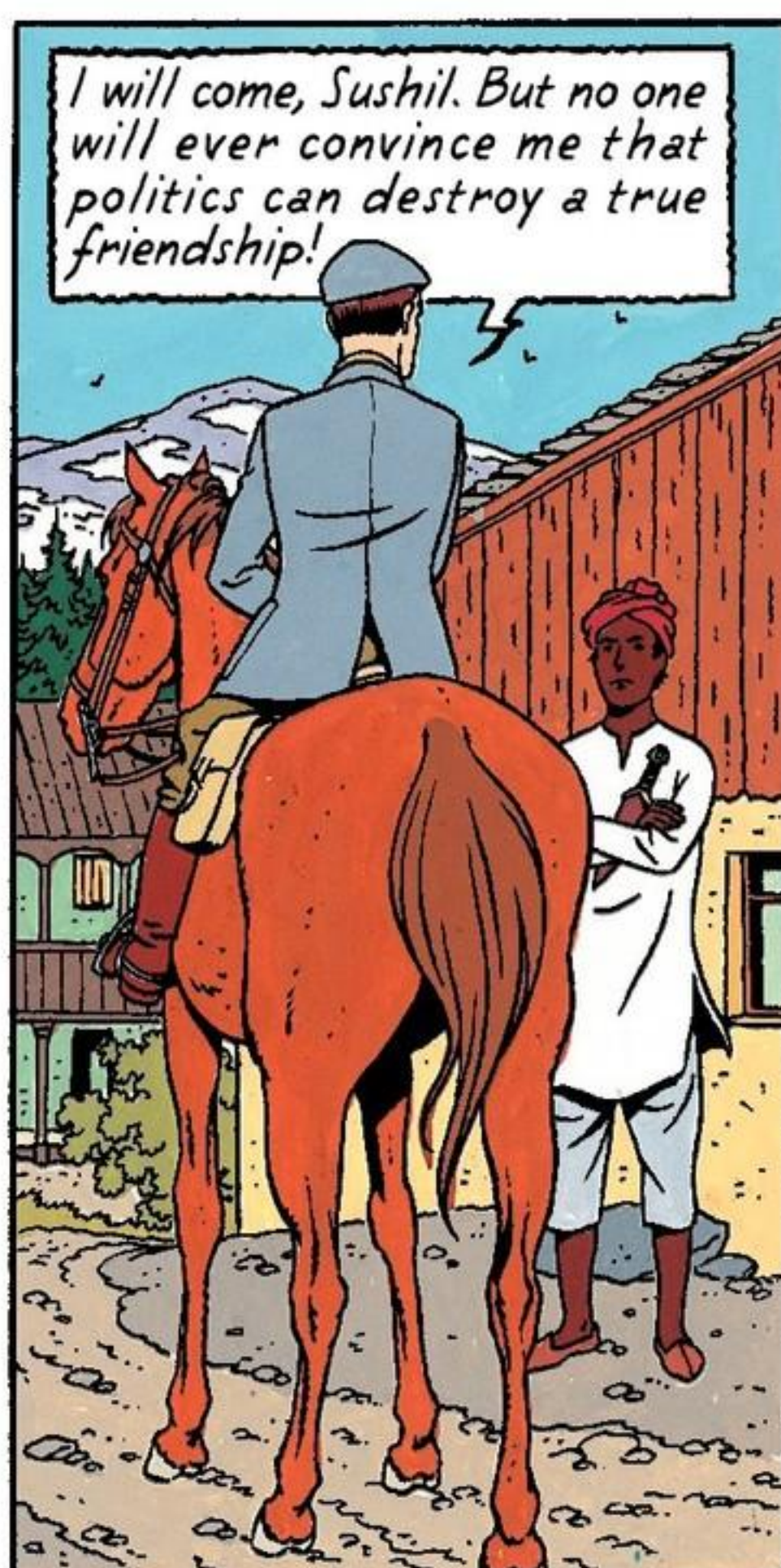
By Jove! Everyone is constantly telling me that I can't or won't understand! But I'd very much like to, actually! I'd like someone to explain to me what kind of future can any ideology aspire to, when right from the start it forbids two old friends to remain so!!!



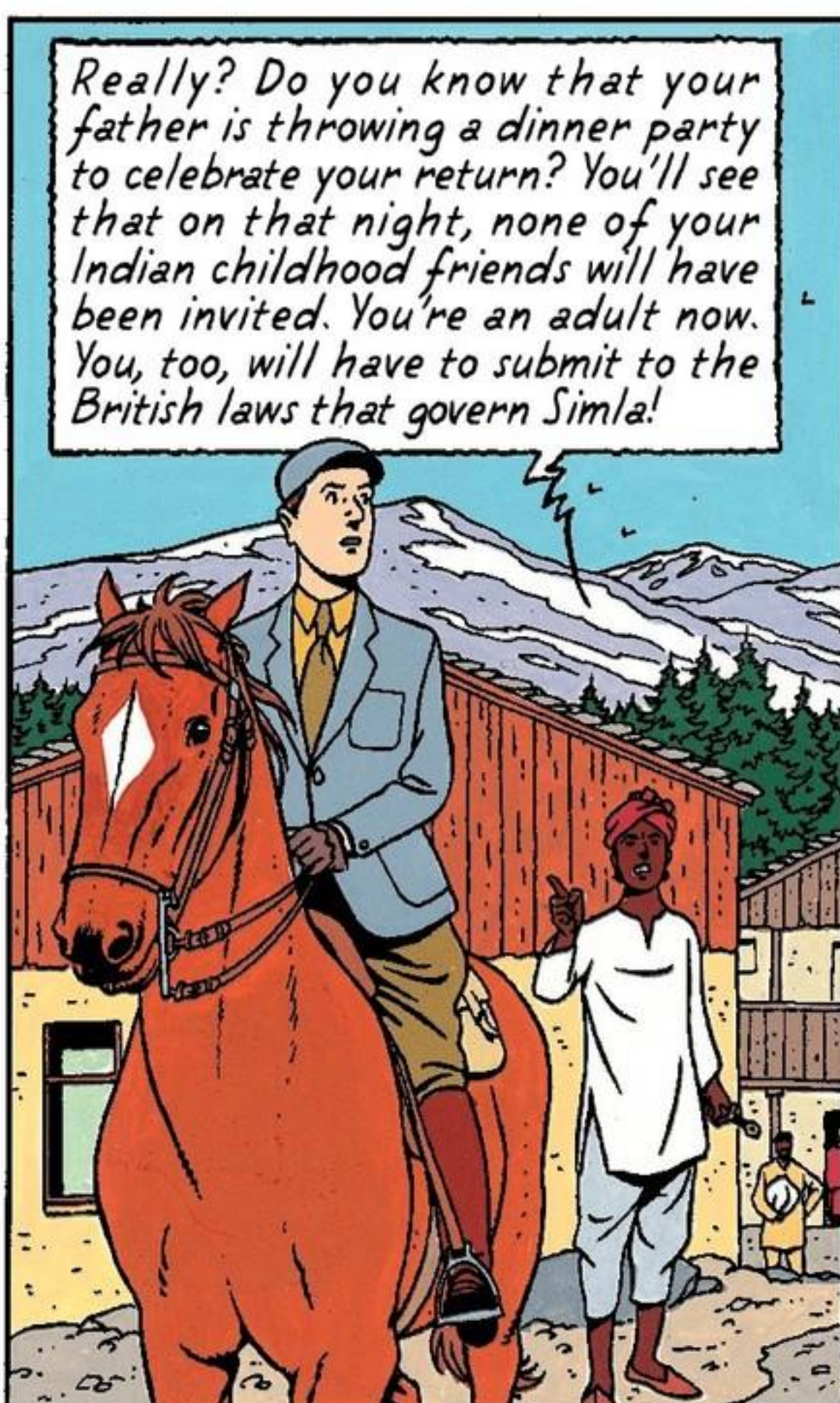
I do not want to hurt or offend you. So, I will take the dagger with the green stone—green as Scotland and the valley of Simla. I thank you for not forgetting your promise. As for me, I will give you a chance to understand what is happening in my country. Come back to the village at nightfall. Emperor Ashoka will speak tonight, and then you will be able to broaden your mind.



Emperor Ashoka? What is...
Tonight you'll see.



I will come, Sushil. But no one will ever convince me that politics can destroy a true friendship!

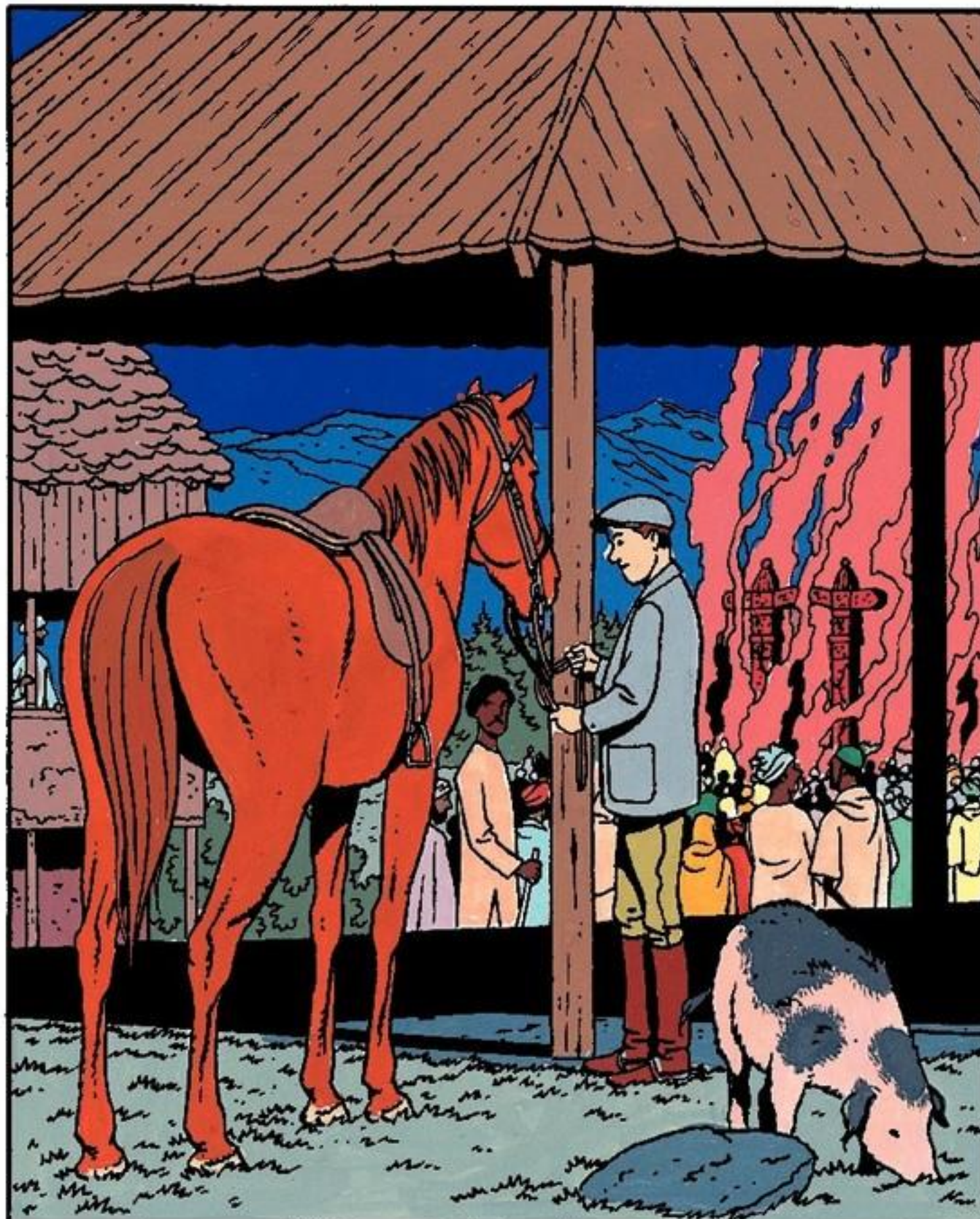
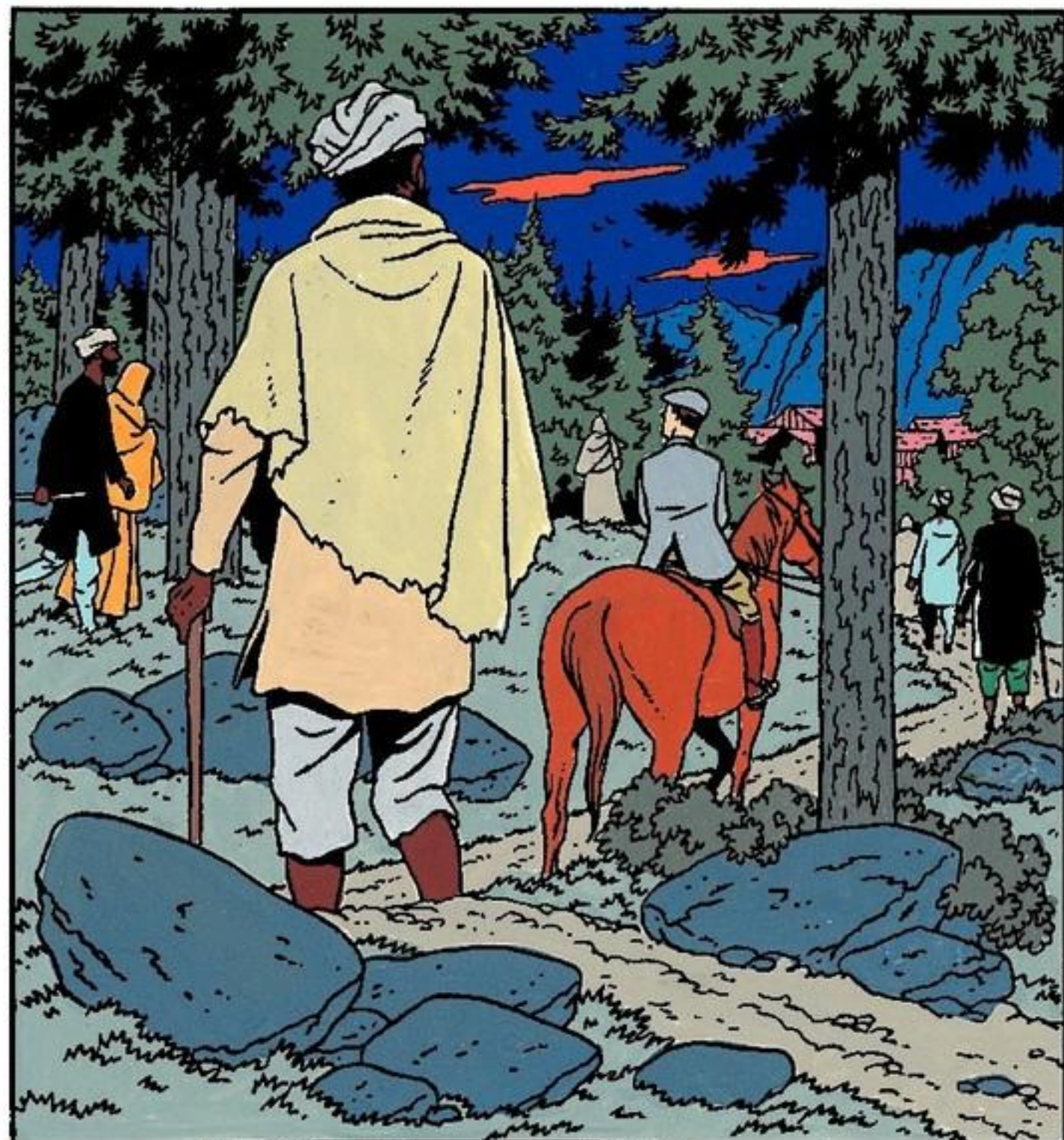


Really? Do you know that your father is throwing a dinner party to celebrate your return? You'll see that on that night, none of your Indian childhood friends will have been invited. You're an adult now. You, too, will have to submit to the British laws that govern Simla!

UPSET AT HIS FRIEND'S WORDS, MORTIMER TURNS HIS HORSE BACK TOWARDS SIMLA, UNAWARE THAT FROM THE SHADOW OF A GREAT PINE A STRANGE CHARACTER IS LOOKING AT HIM INTENTLY.



THAT SAME EVENING, MORTIMER IS BACK IN THE VILLAGE. AROUND HIM, MEN AND WOMEN FROM THE NEIGHBOURING HAMLETS APPEAR IN GREAT NUMBERS.



THE CROWD ASSEMBLES AROUND A VERY ANCIENT TORANA*. IN THE MIDST OF THE GROUP, MORTIMER SPOTS SUSHIL. HIS FRIEND SEEMS TO BE WATCHING OVER A SINGULARLY BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN OF RESERVED BEARING.



MAKING HIS WAY THROUGH THE CROWD FULL OF HOSTILE GLARES, THE YOUNG BRITON JOINS SUSHIL.

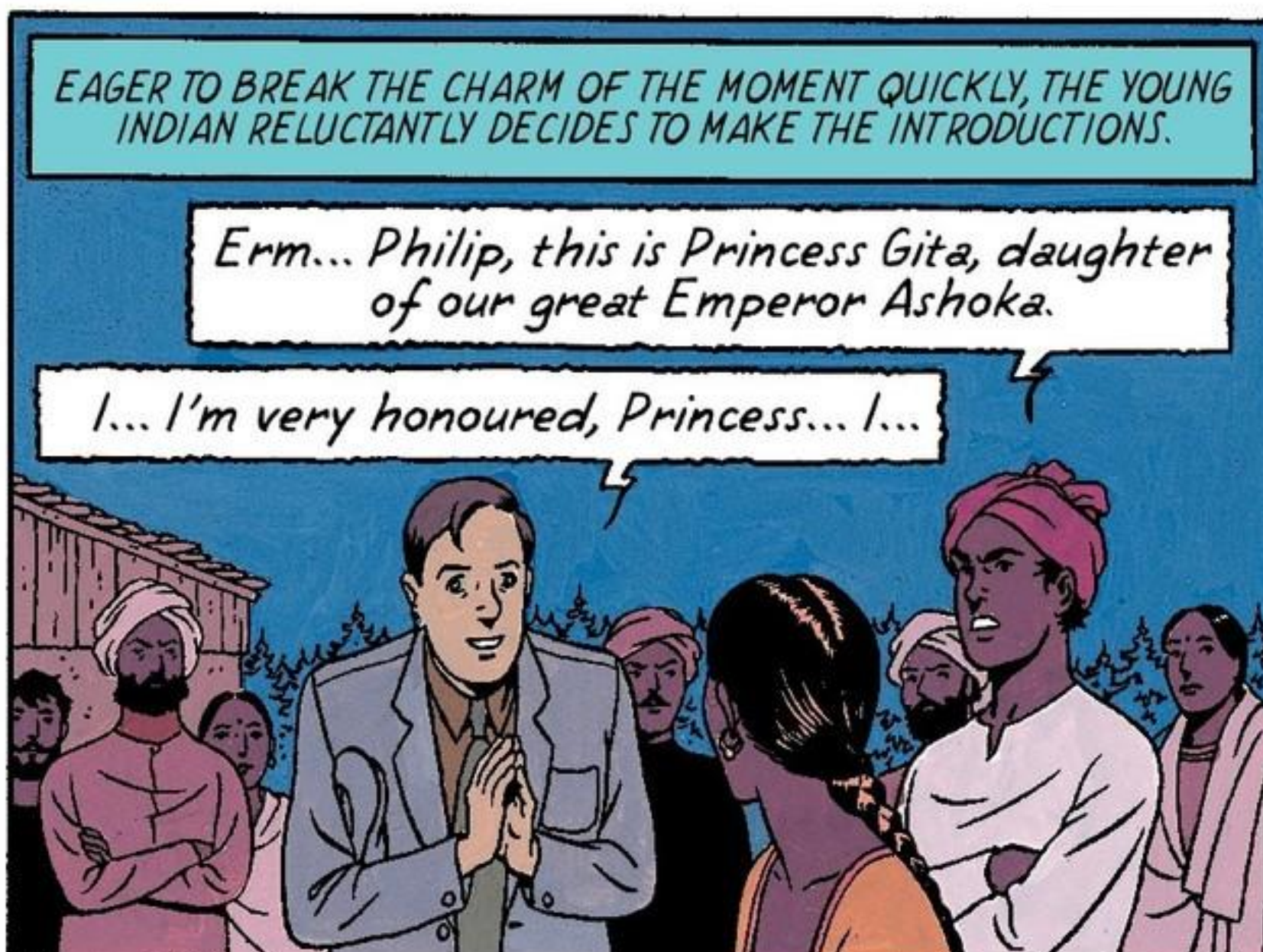


Oh?... You still came?

Of course. I don't remember ever refusing one of your invitations, Sushil. I wasn't going to start today!



AT THAT INSTANT, FASCINATED, MORTIMER LOCKS EYES WITH THE UNKNOWN YOUNG WOMAN. HER OWN EYES TAKE ON A PECULIAR GLINT THEN, MUCH TO SUSHIL'S OBVIOUS DISPLEASURE.



EAGER TO BREAK THE CHARM OF THE MOMENT QUICKLY, THE YOUNG INDIAN RELUCTANTLY DECIDES TO MAKE THE INTRODUCTIONS.

Erm... Philip, this is Princess Gita, daughter of our great Emperor Ashoka.

I... I'm very honoured, Princess... I...

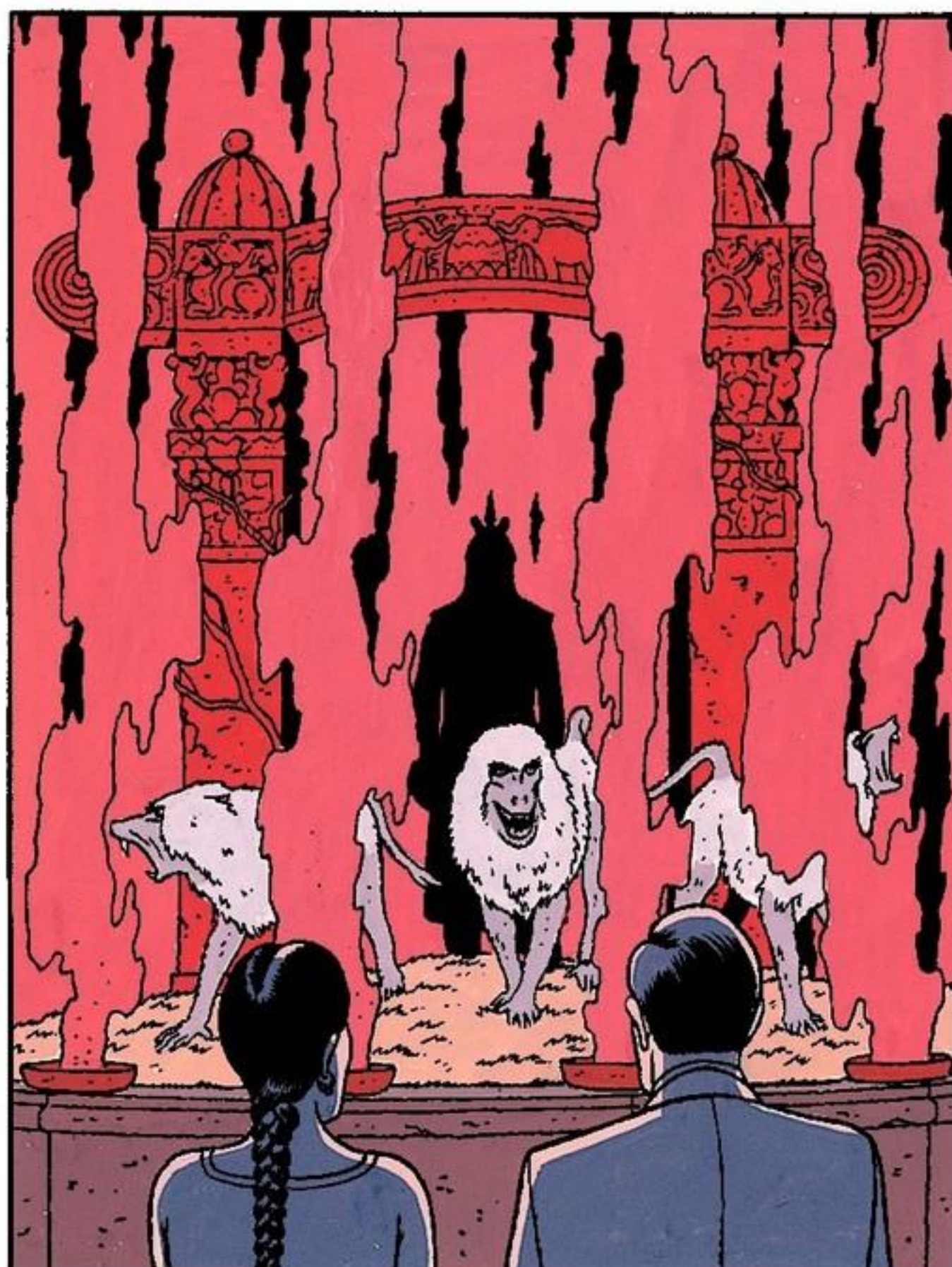
SUDDENLY, THE SHRILL CRIES OF BABOONS SOUND, AND SUSHIL CUTS THE INTRODUCTIONS SHORT.



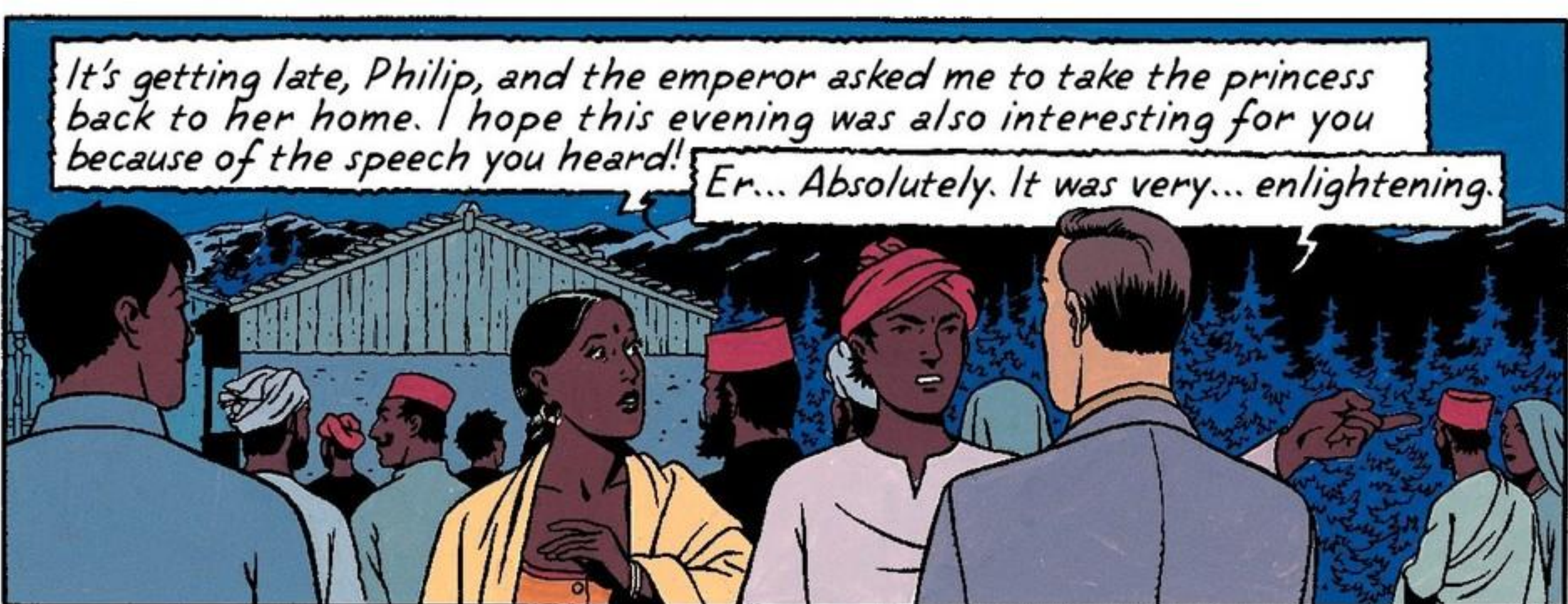
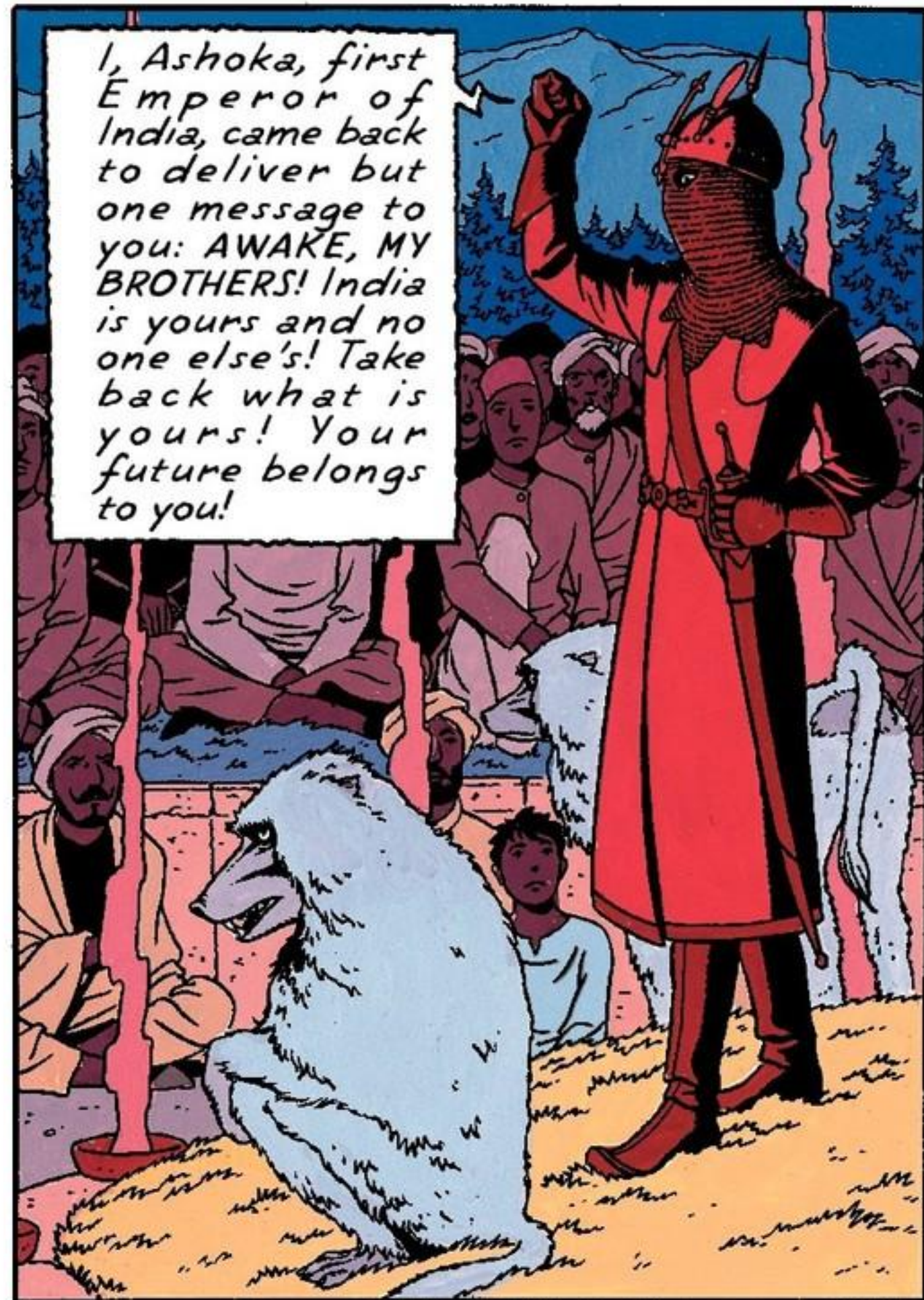
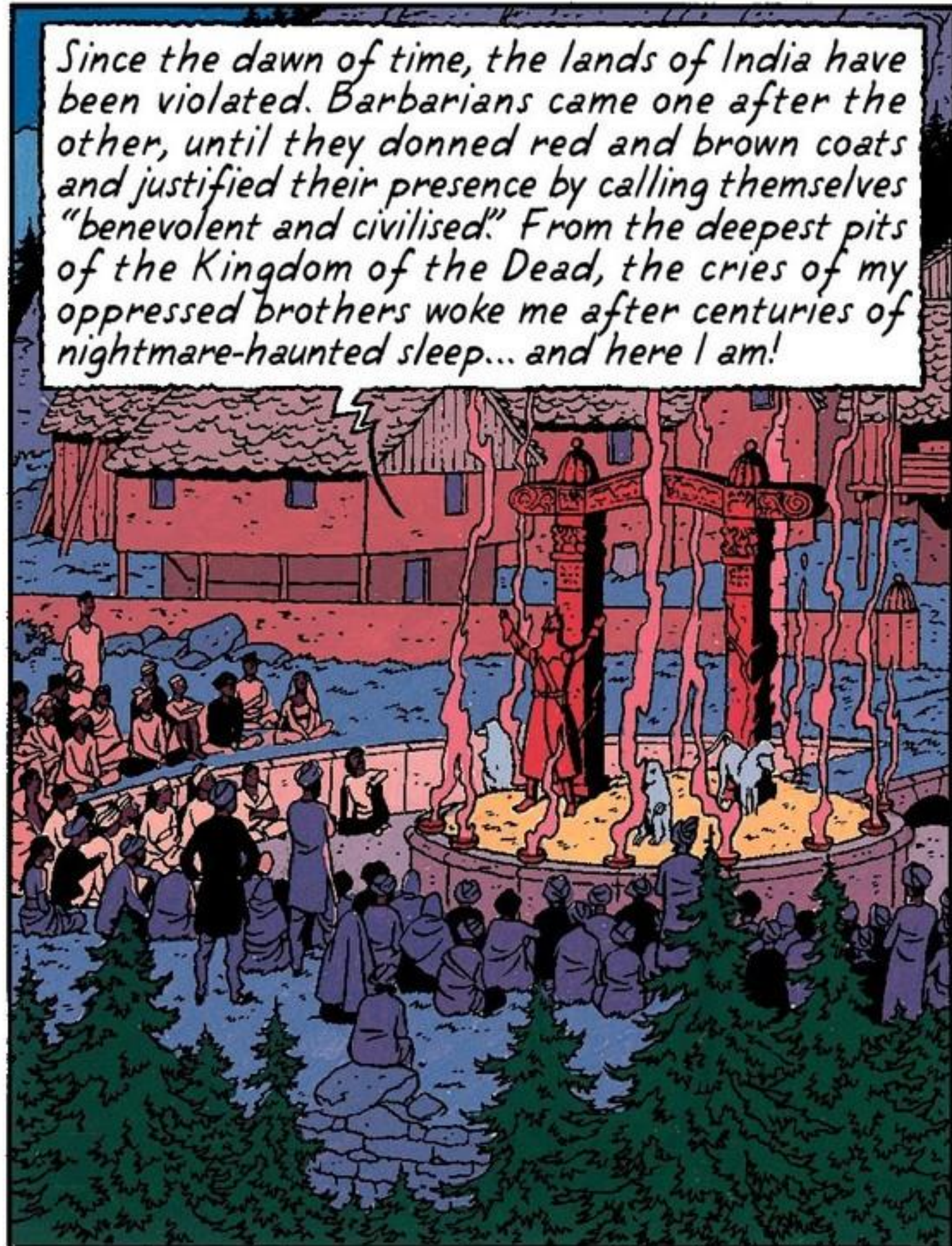
Silence, now! The emperor is about to appear!



DESPITE SUSHIL'S DISAPPROVING GLARE, WITH A GRACEFUL GESTURE THE YOUNG WOMAN INVITES MORTIMER TO SIT BY HER SIDE.



*BUDDHIST OR HINDU "GATEWAY" MONUMENT



THE NEXT DAY, LATE MORNING. DRAWN BY THE SOUND OF THE PIANO, MORTIMER JOINS HIS MOTHER INSIDE THE LOUNGE.

Good morning, mother!

Philip! Did you sleep well?

Mother, do you think it's really unacceptable that the Indians want to be free and independent?

What do you mean, my dear?

Are we truly so superior to the people we rule over? For example... Why couldn't a man from proper British society fall in love with an Indian without it shocking the establishment?...

... I don't understand...

Asking such questions is normal at your age, Philip. Cultural values are too deeply ingrained in people's minds, and too different, for them to be overturned easily. Only time can change things.

Ah! Philip, I was looking for you...

I think it's time we informed you of the surprise we have in store for you. Tonight, we're hosting a great dinner party to celebrate your return and your brilliant school results. So? What do you think?

I think, Father, that it will surely be a magnificent party. An Indian-less evening. Among well-born people! Mag-ni-fi-cent!

?!

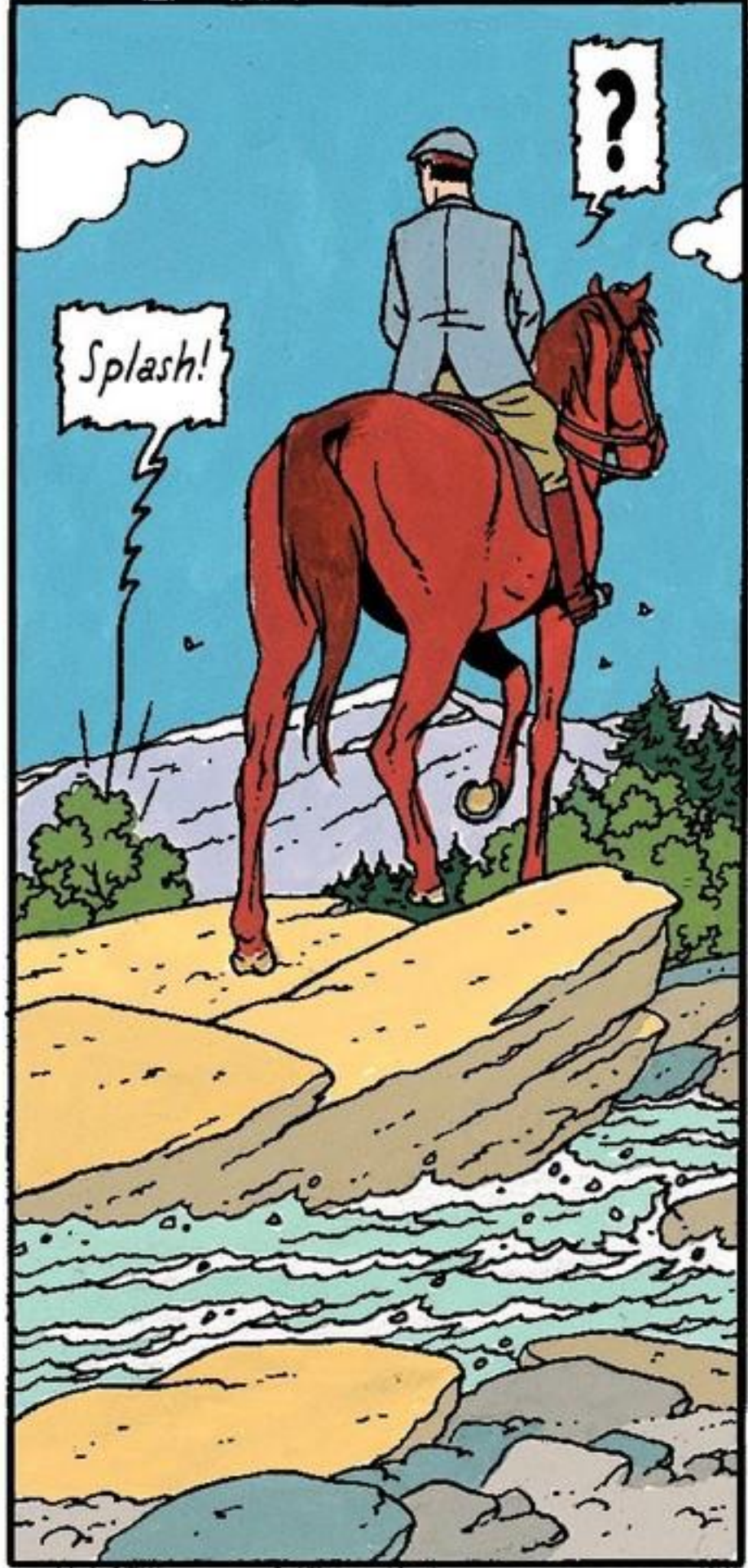
By Jove! My dear, could you tell me if I said something I shouldn't have...?

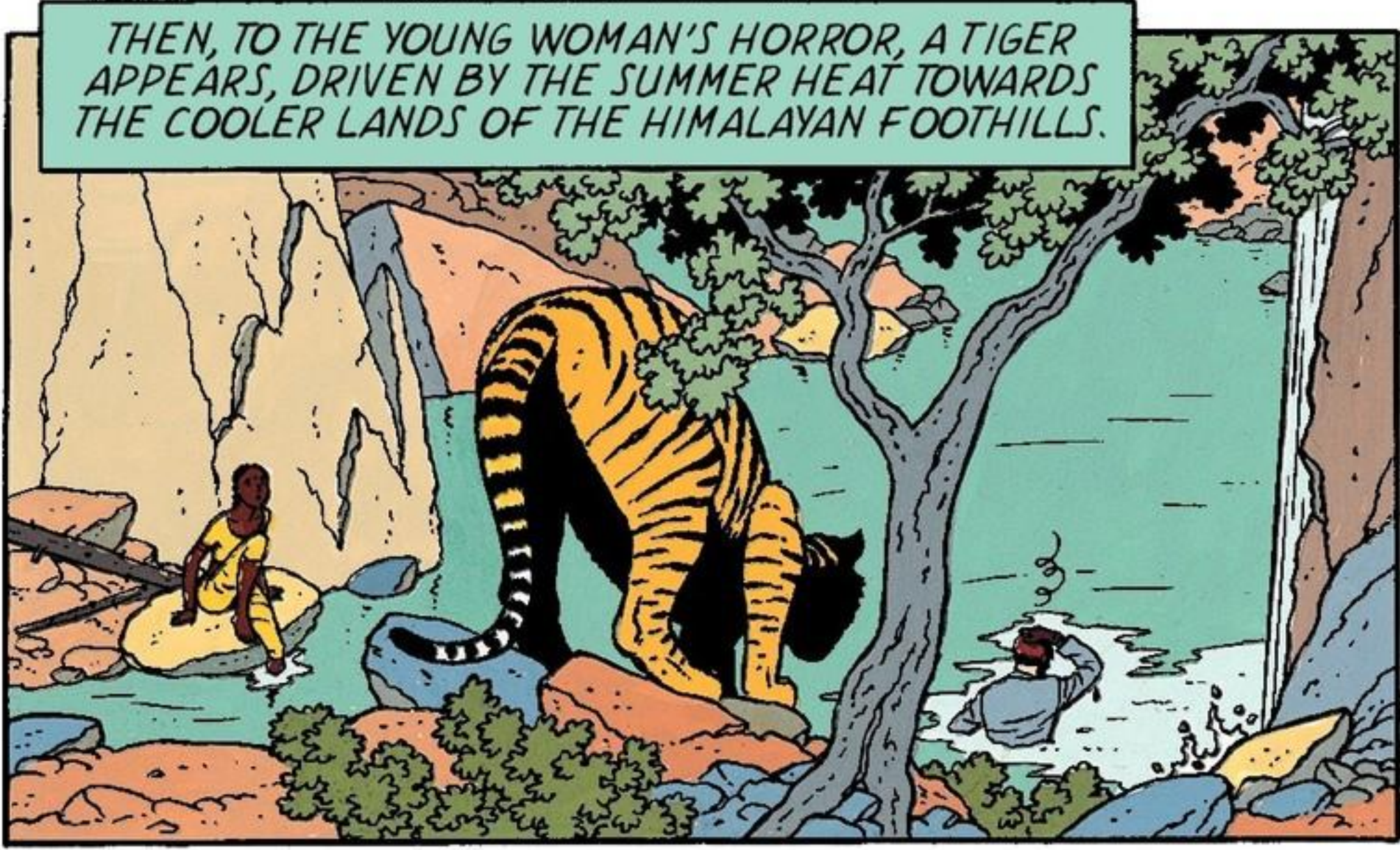
The thing is, my dear, that your son is growing, and that he is more sensitive than he would let show—including to ideals of liberty and justice. What's more...

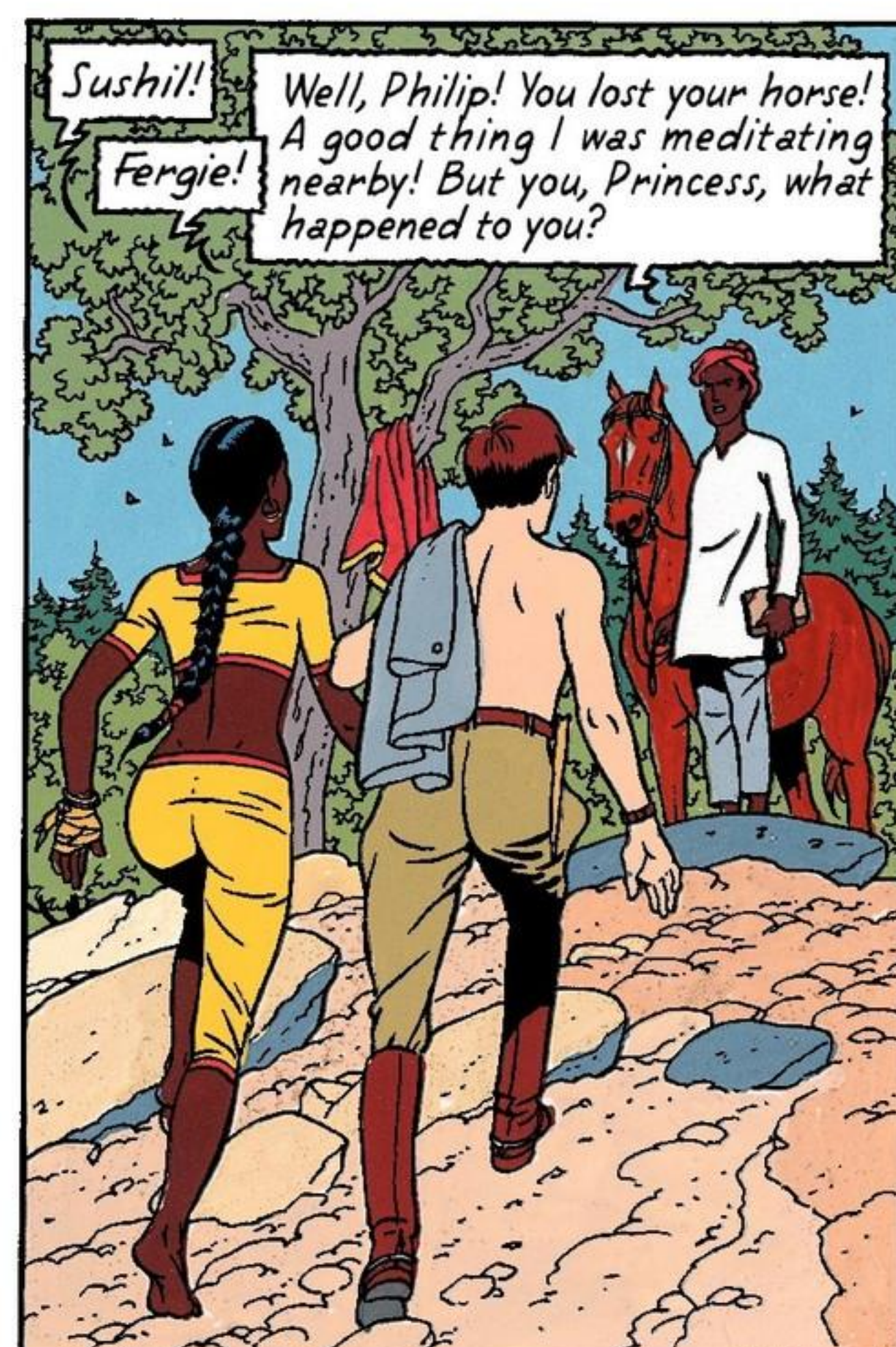
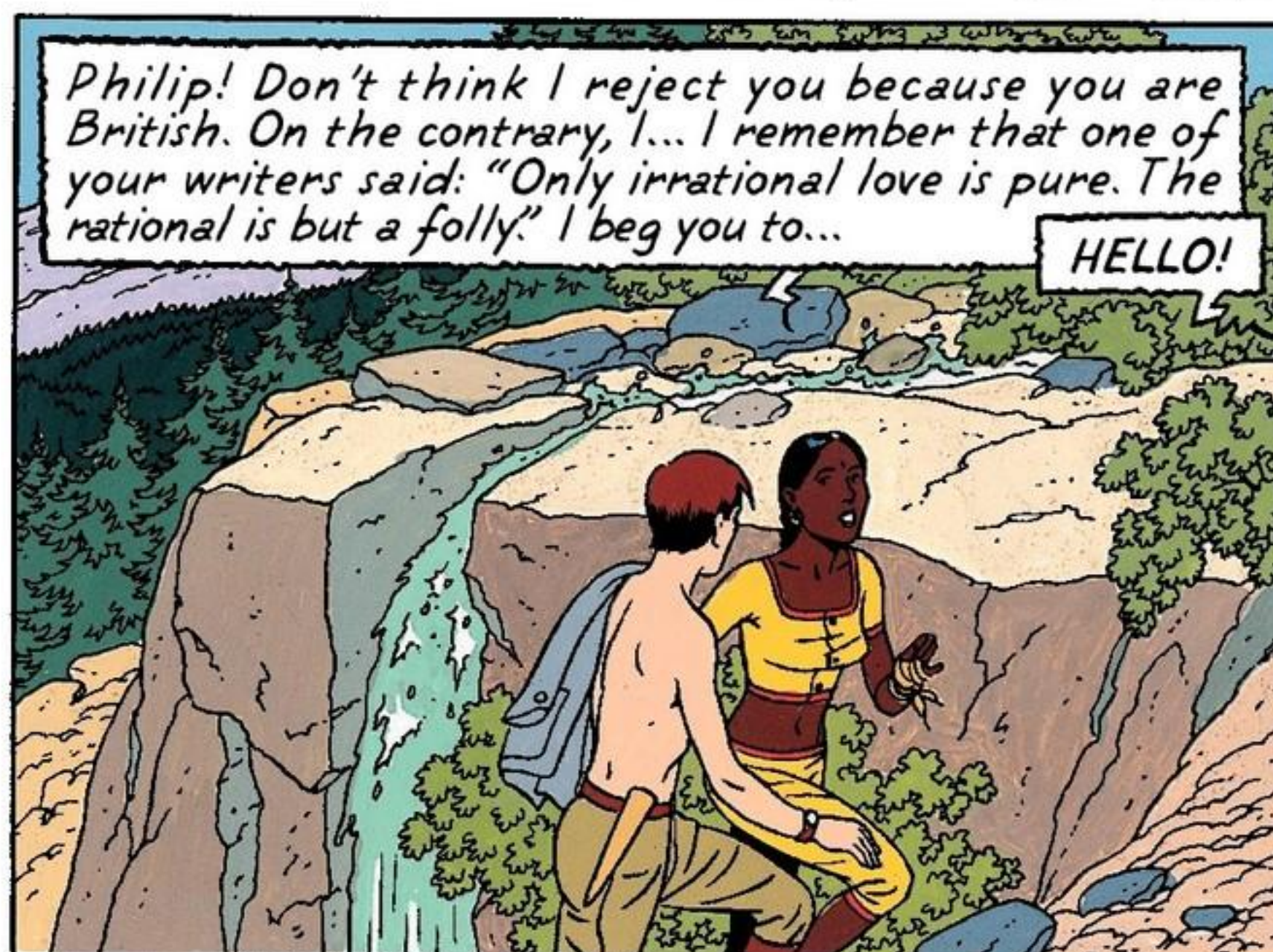
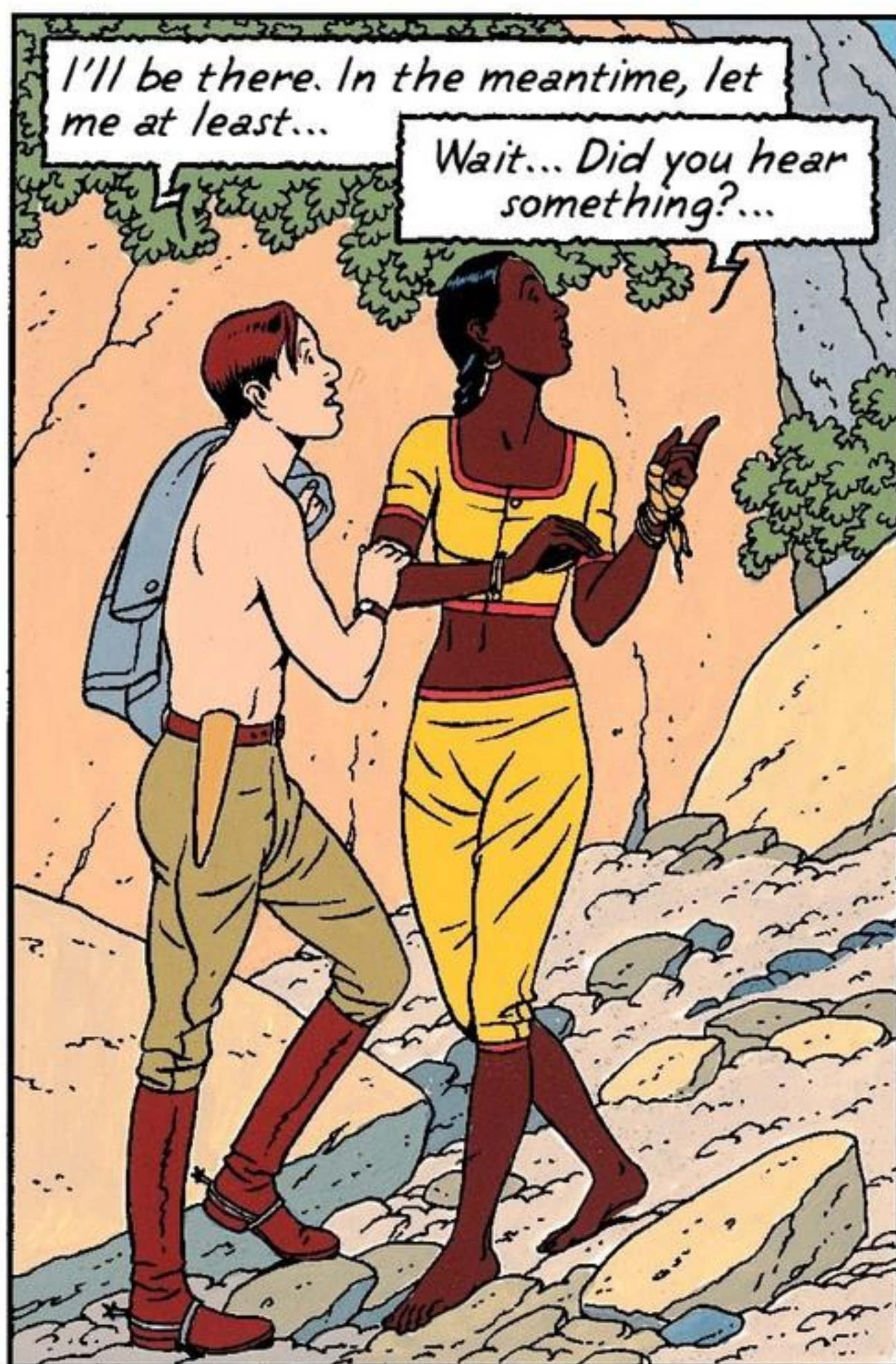
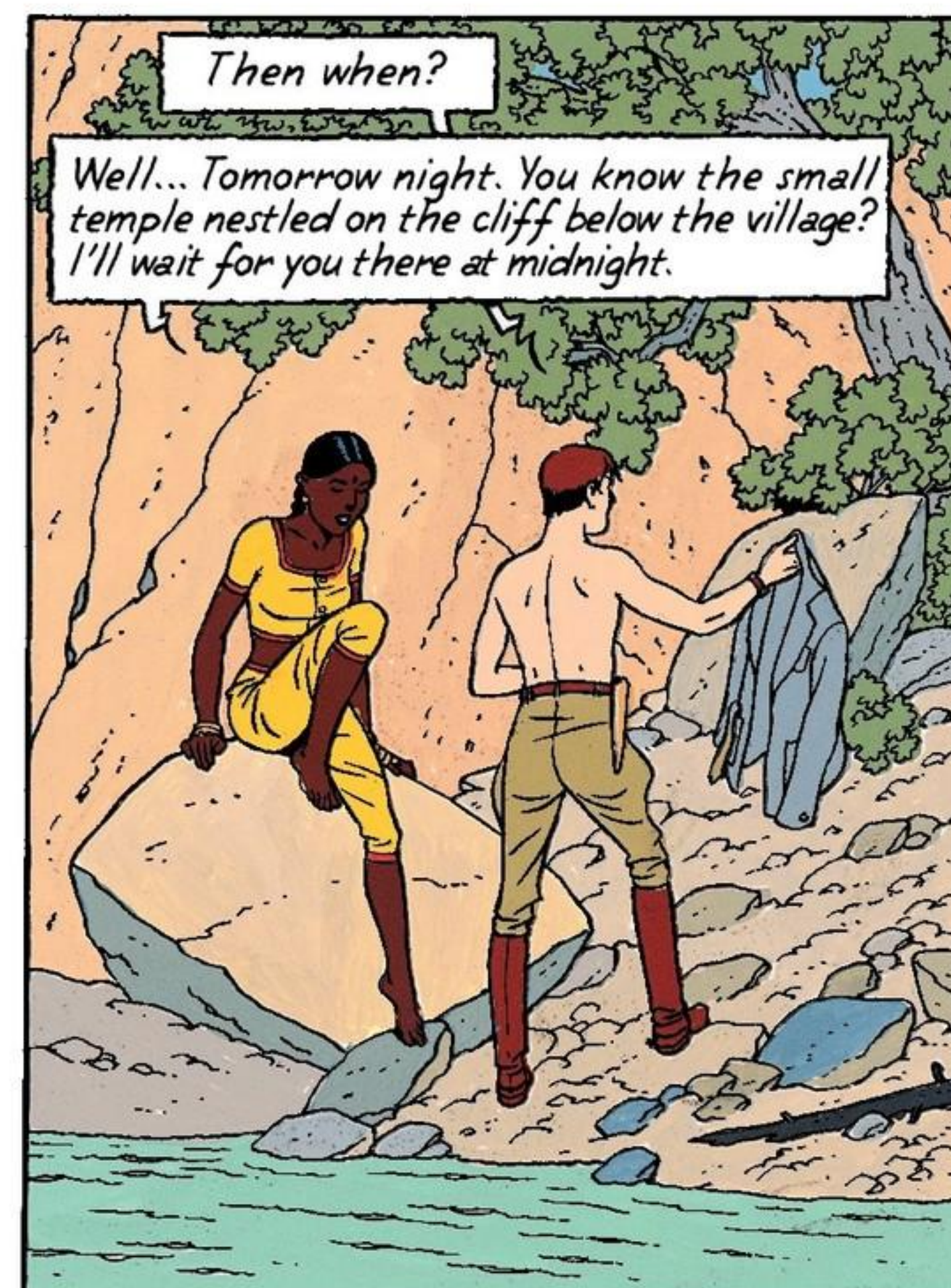
An Indian girl?! My son? That's ridiculous!!!

Calm down, Archibald! There's no point in getting upset over the feelings of a boy just out of his teenage years.

... He'll find the path of reason on his own, eventually.





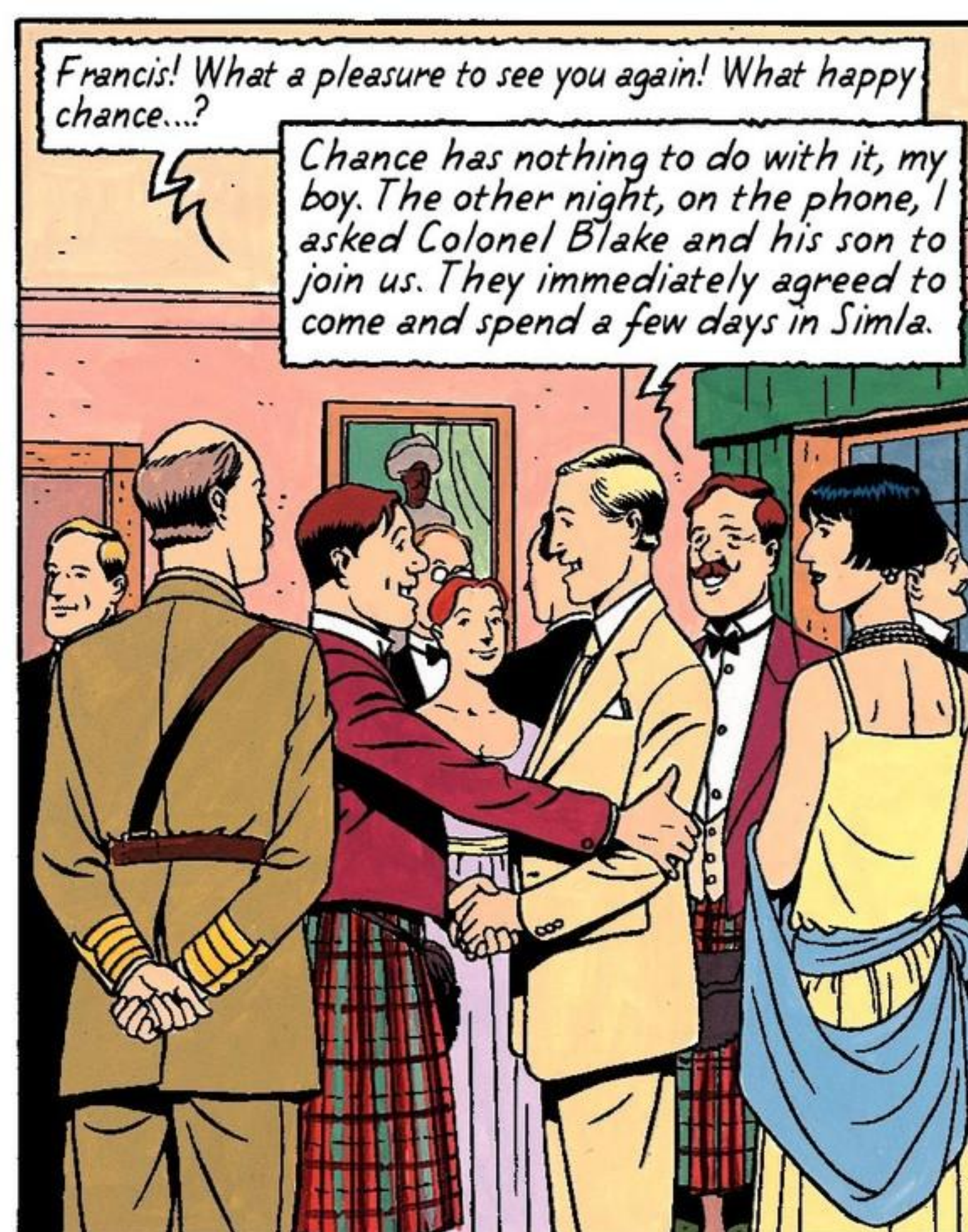
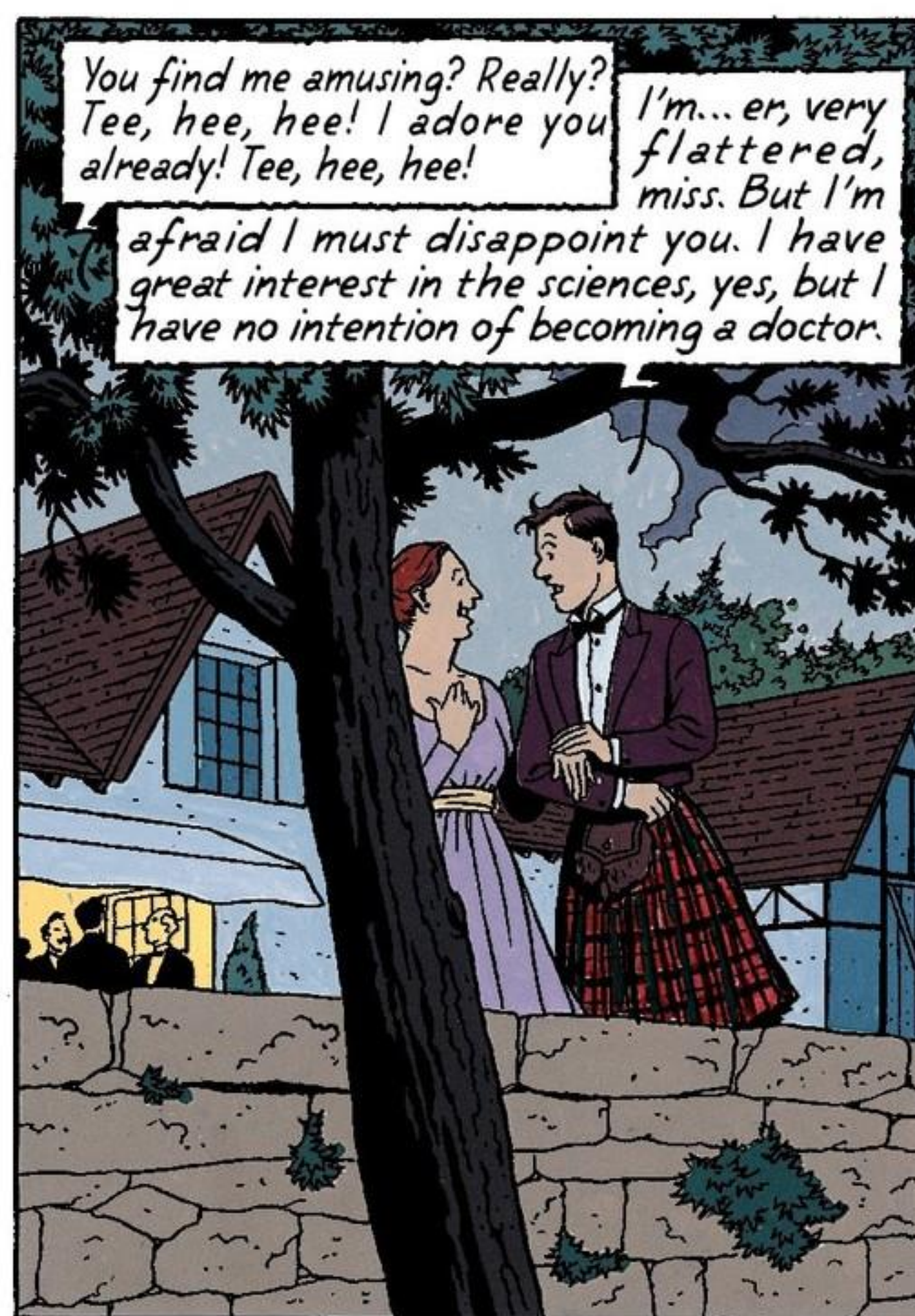
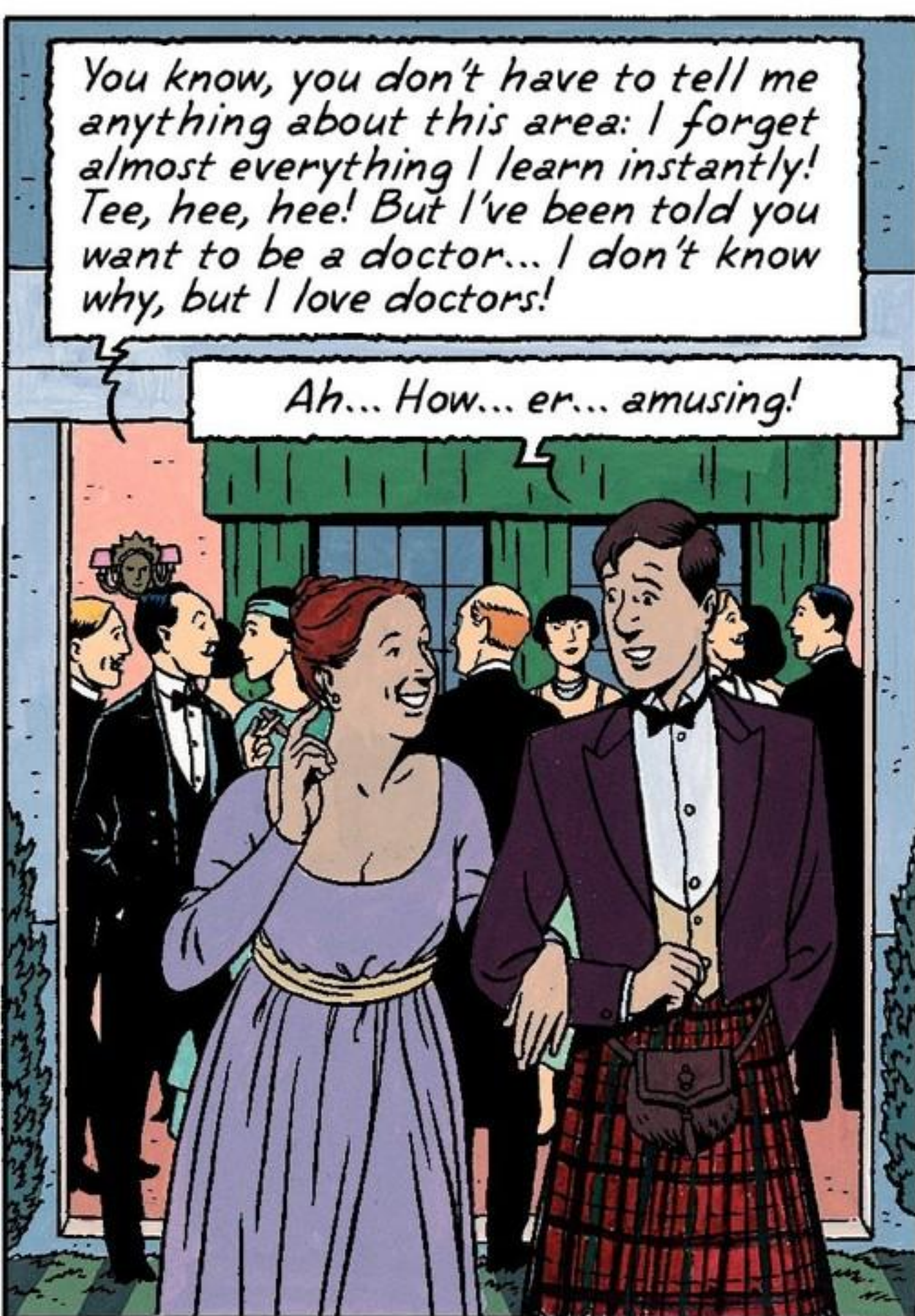


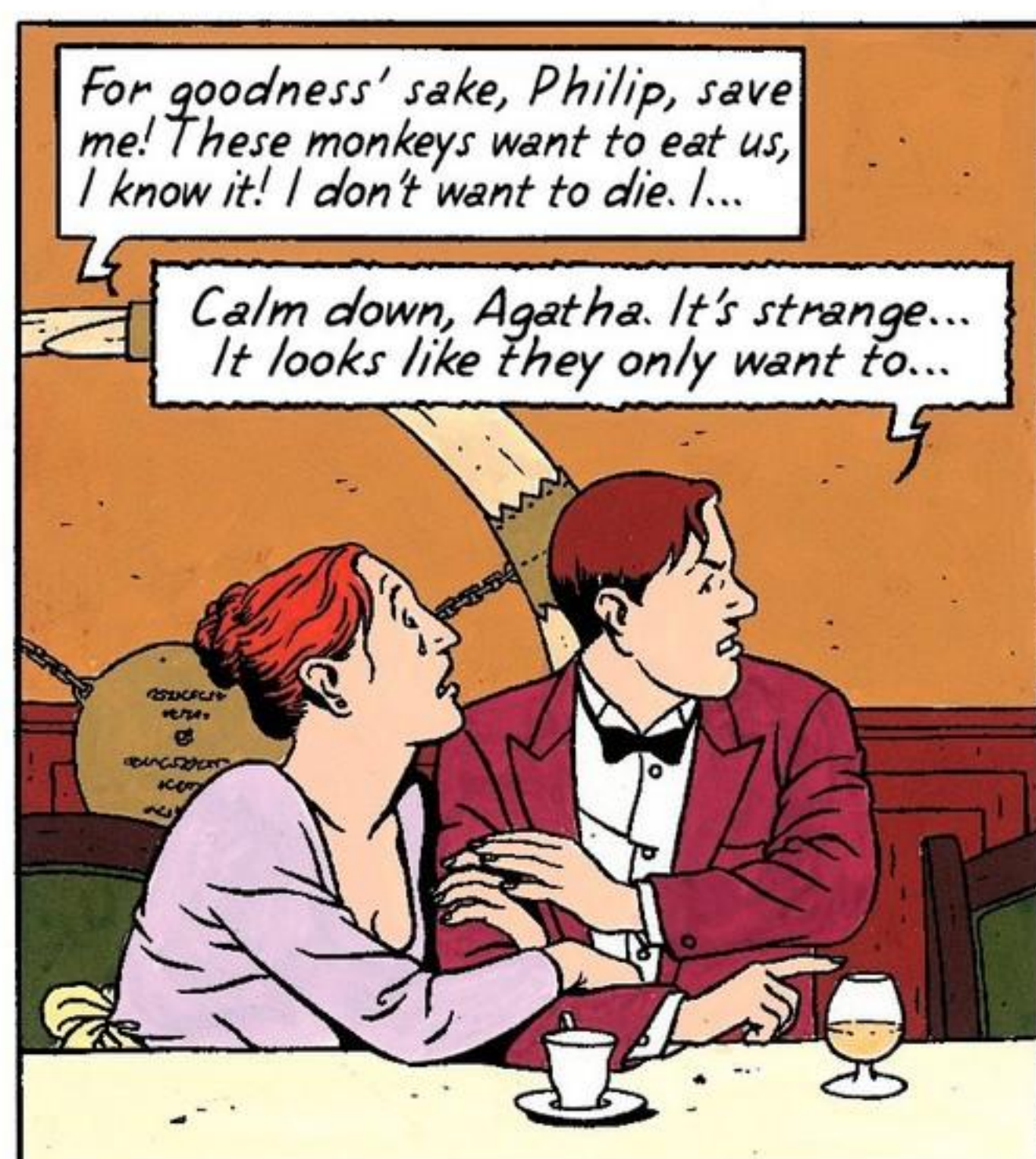
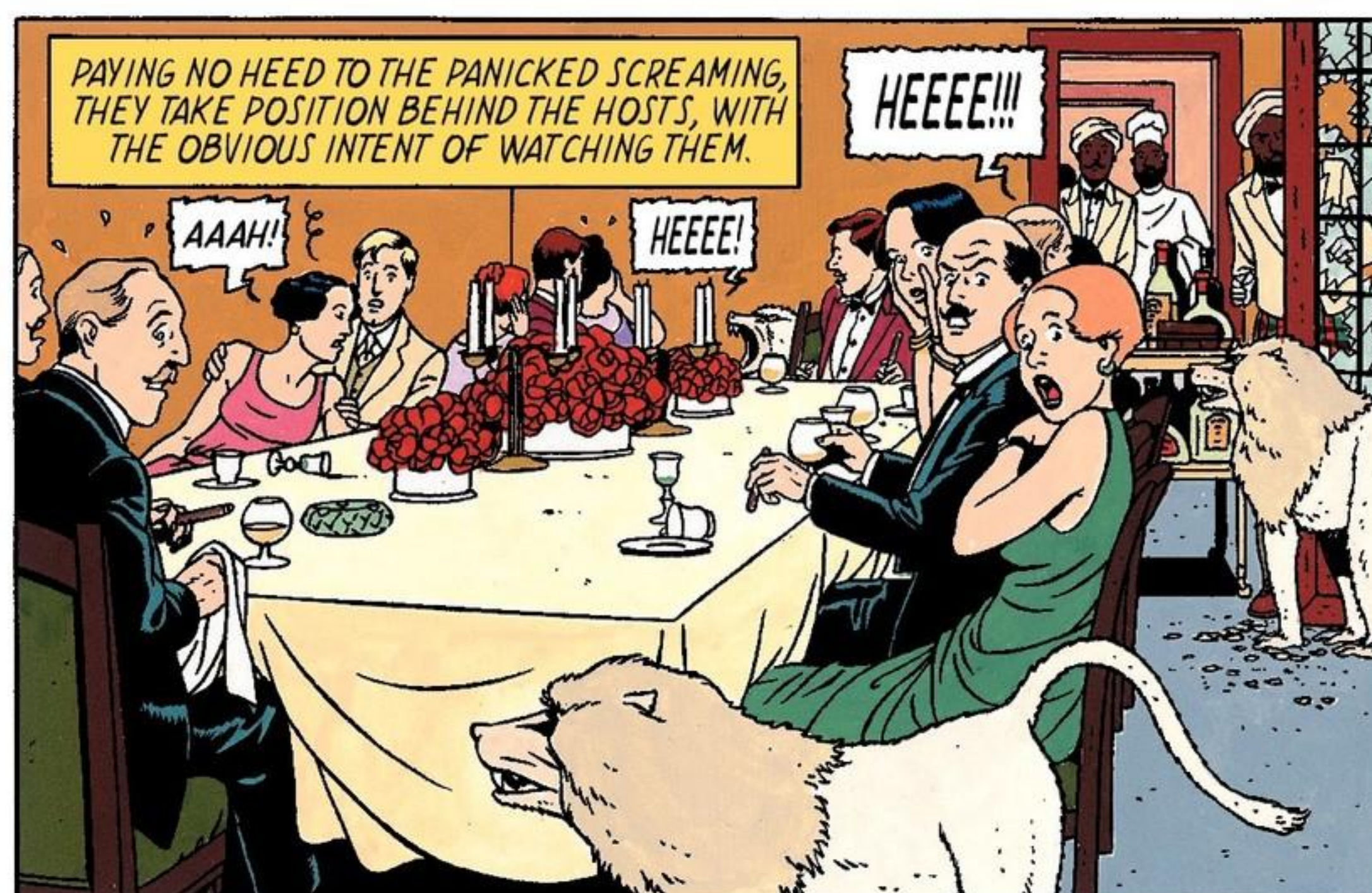
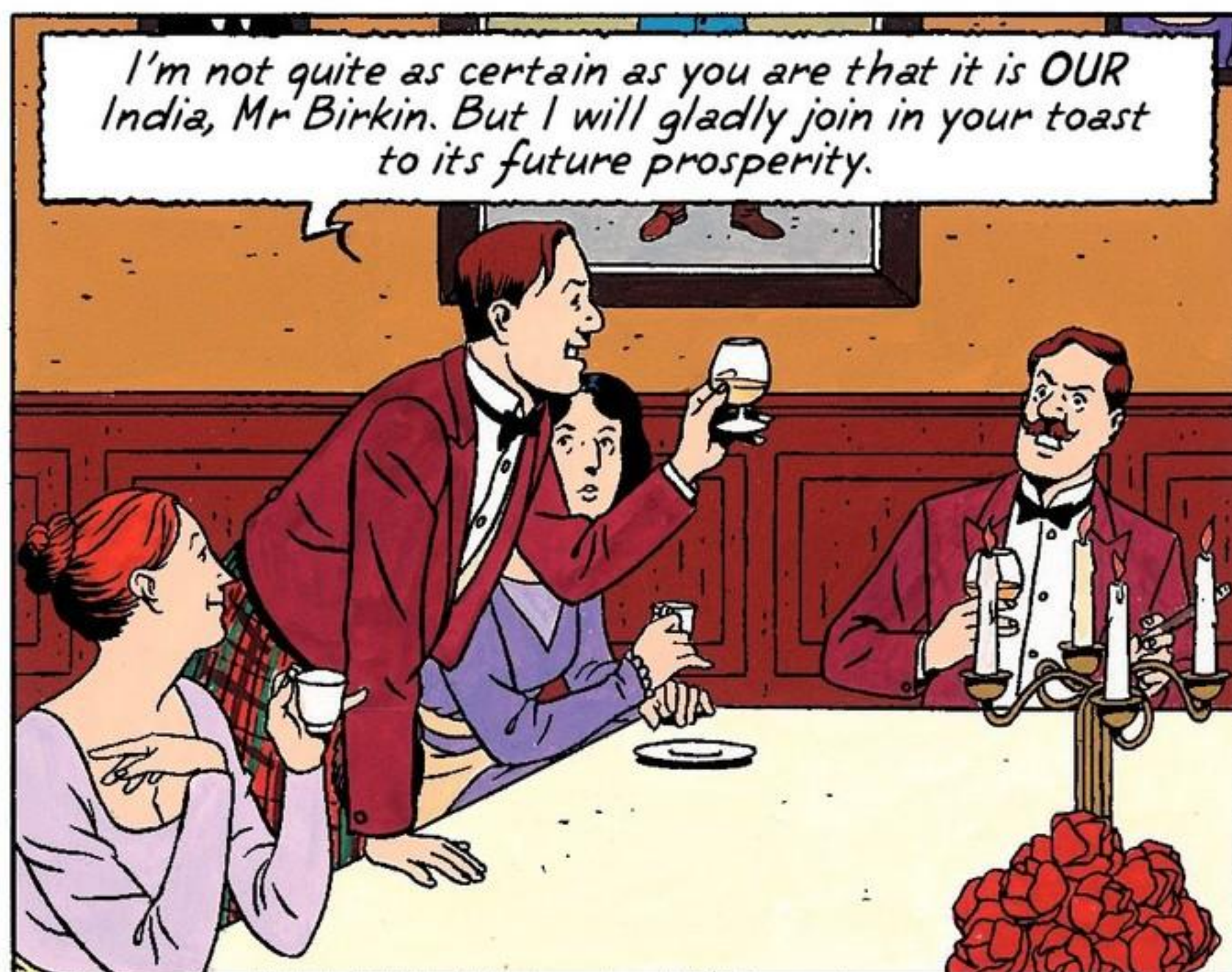
RUDELY INTERRUPTING MORTIMER'S EXPLANATIONS, THE YOUNG INDIAN FORCEFULLY PULLS THE PRINCESS BACK TOWARDS THE VILLAGE.

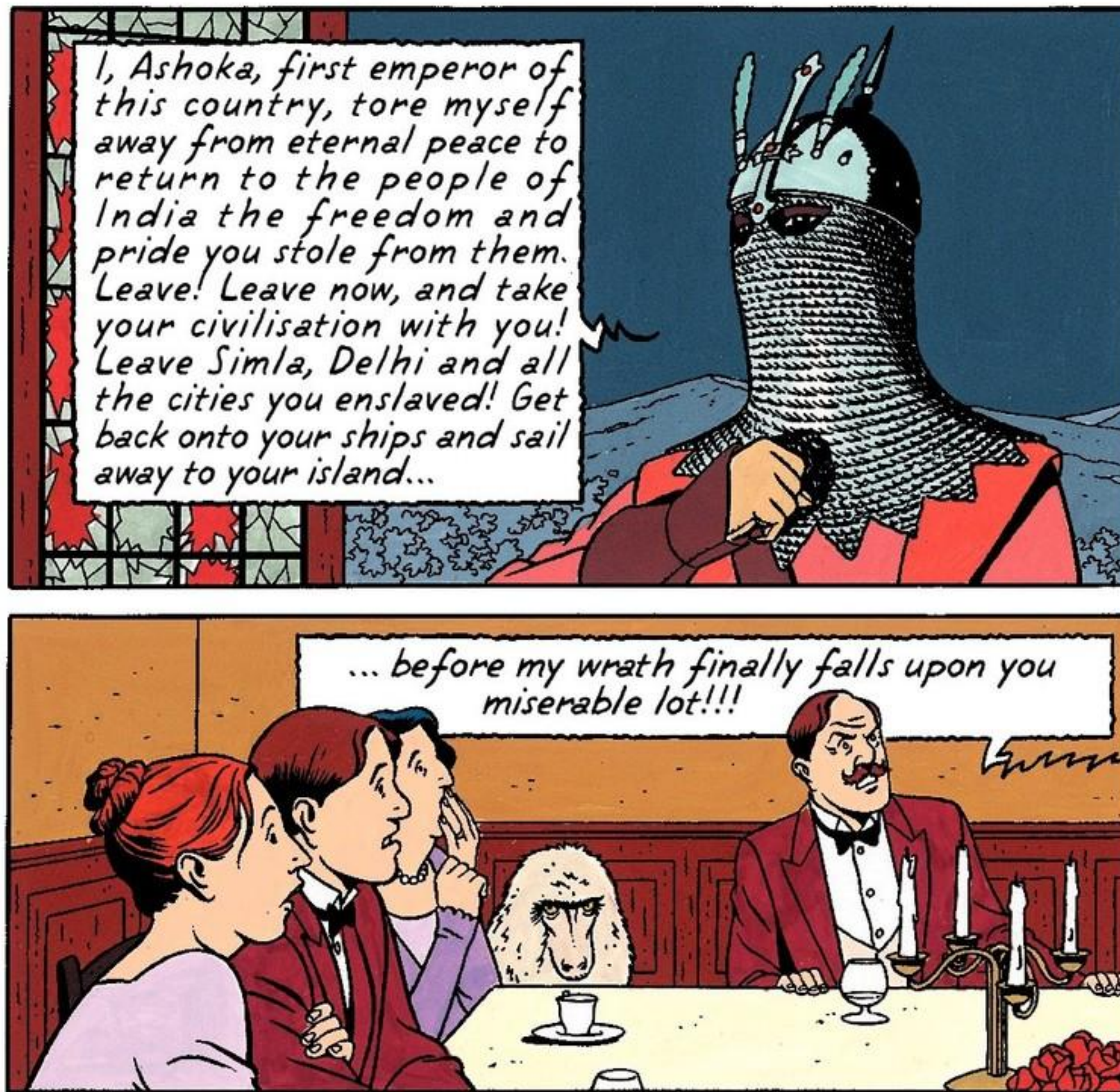


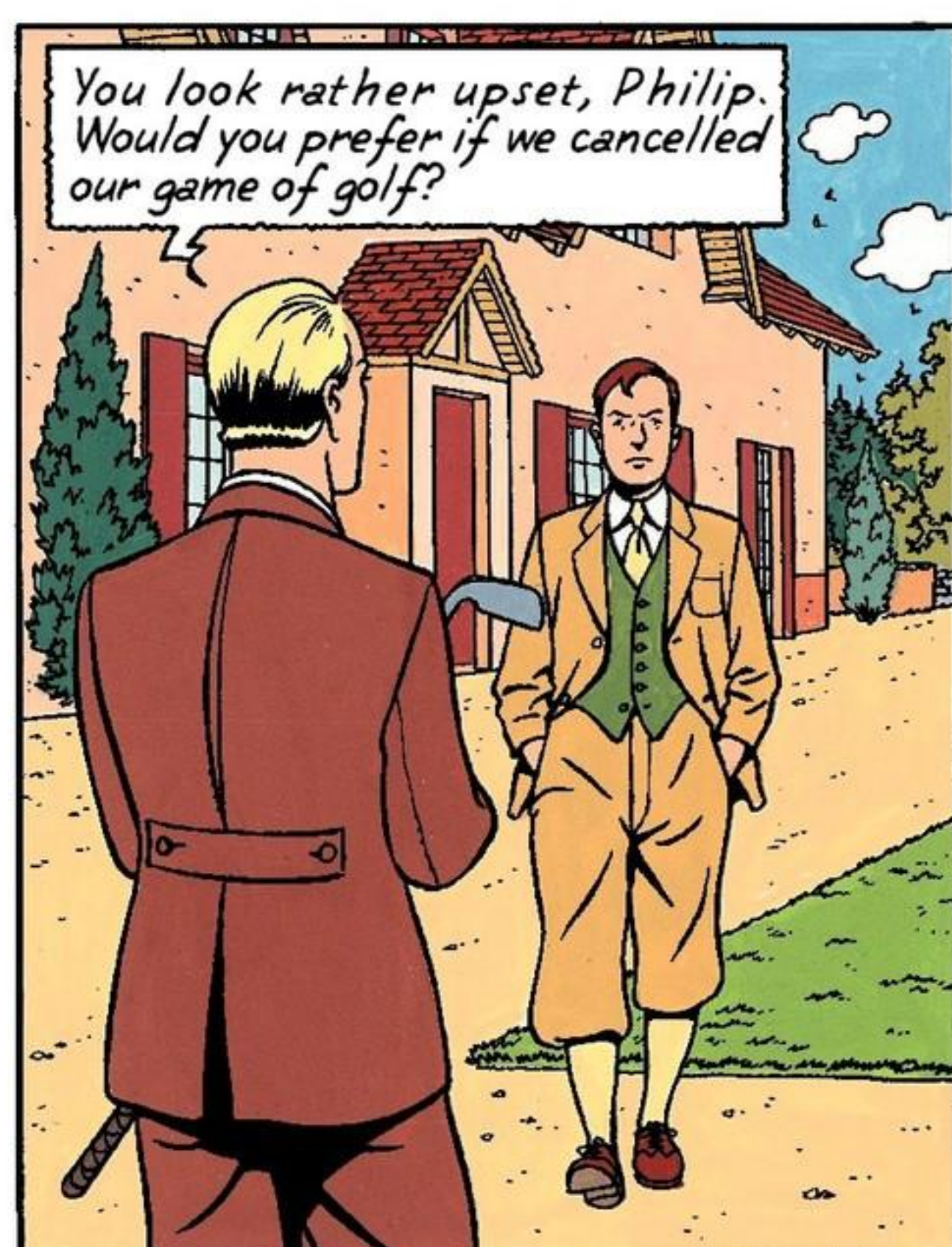
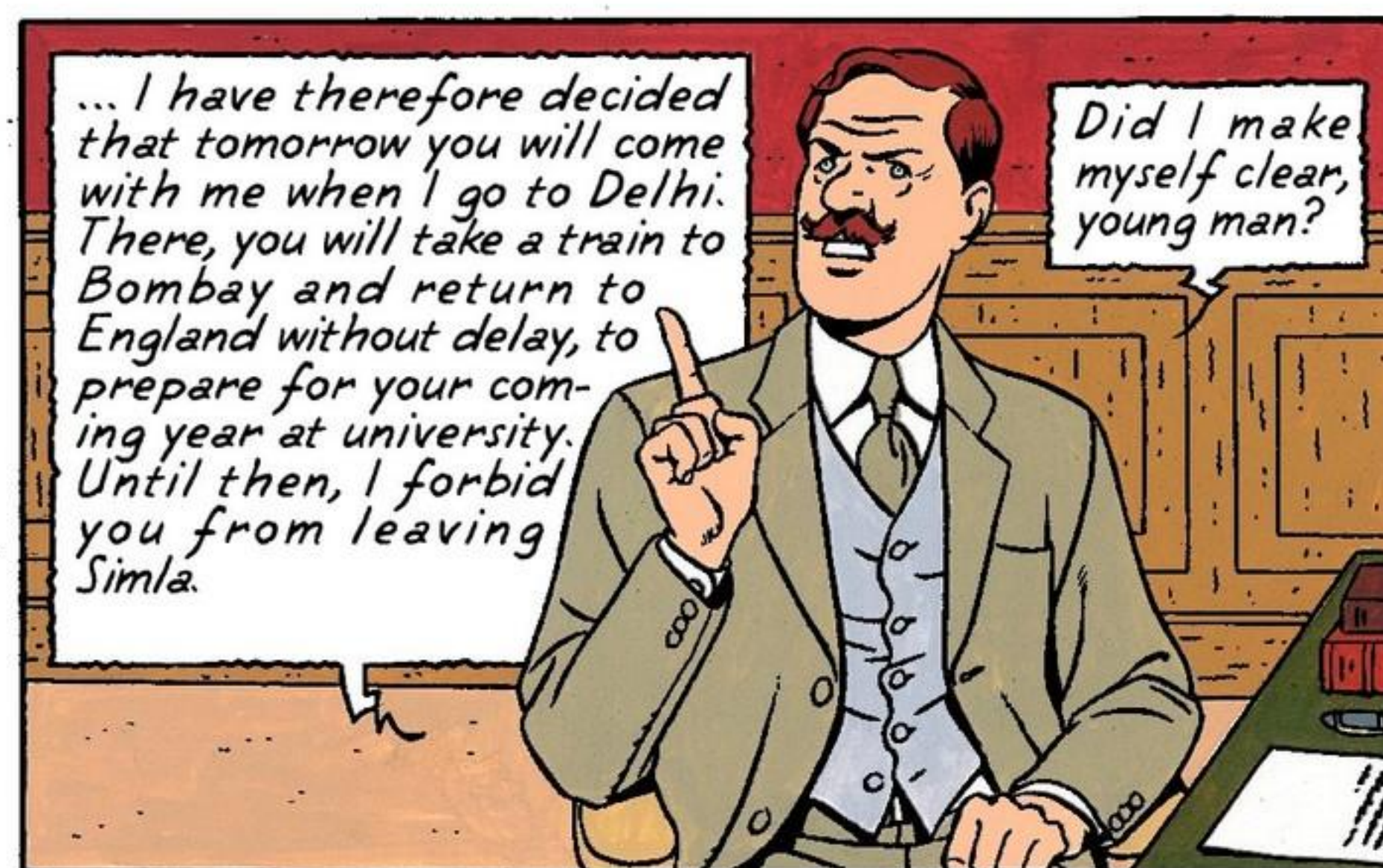
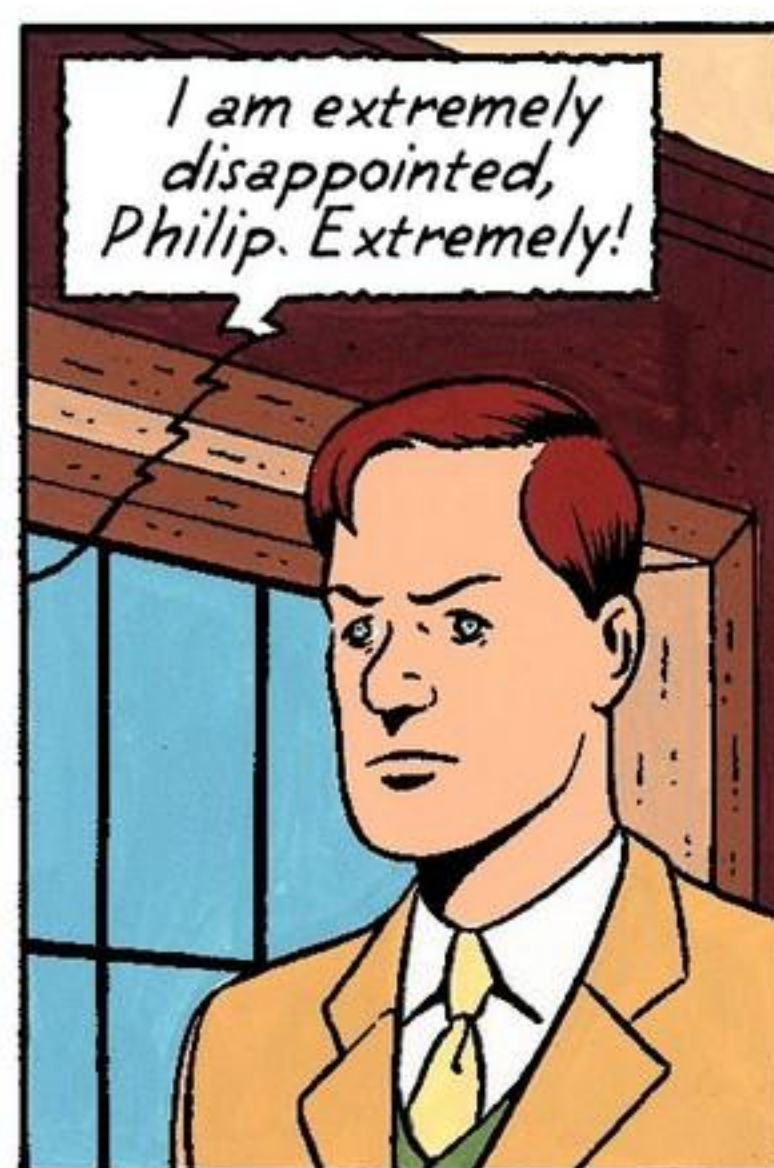
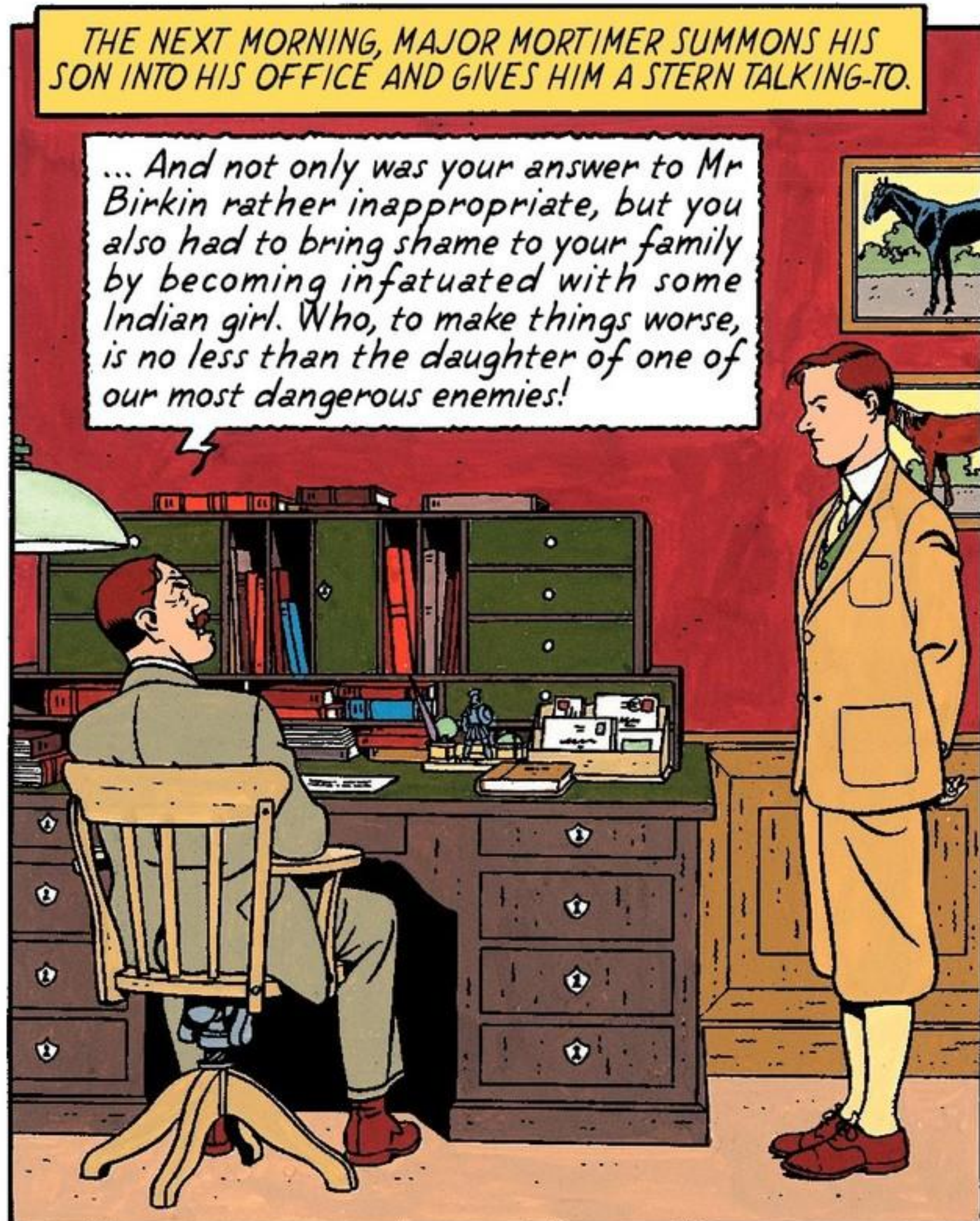
HIS MIND FILLED WITH WARRING EMOTIONS, MORTIMER HEADS BACK TO SIMLA...

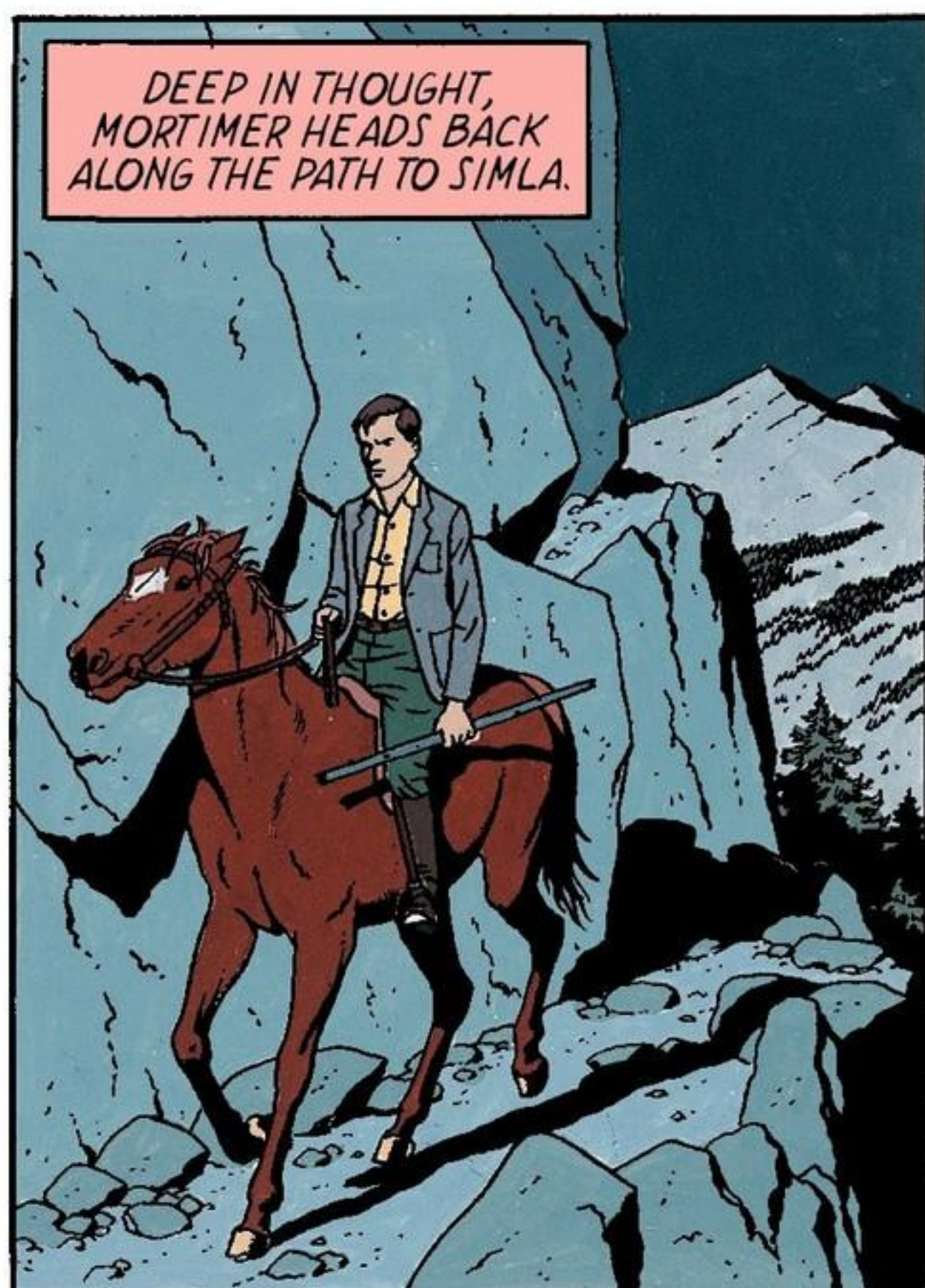


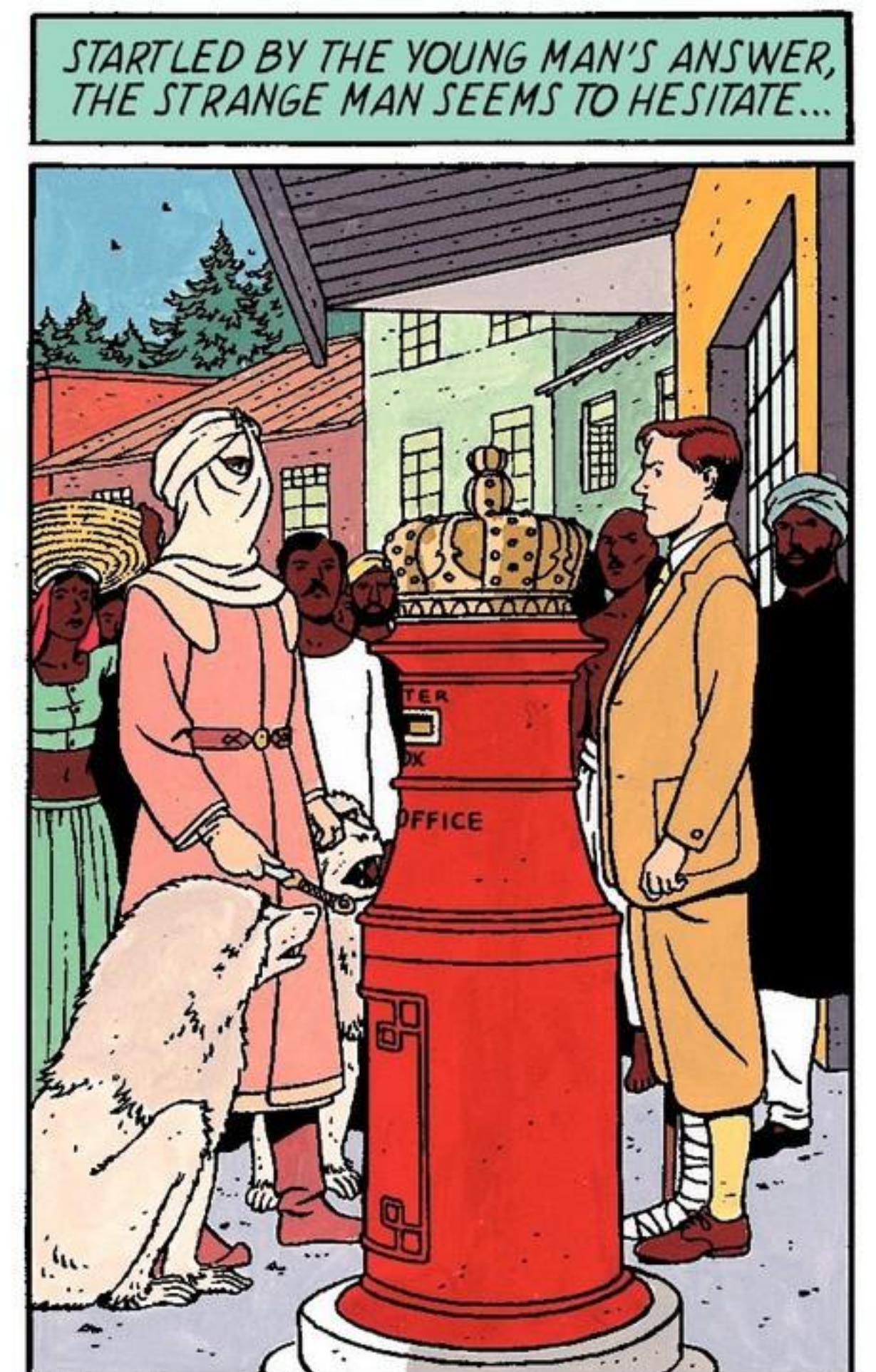
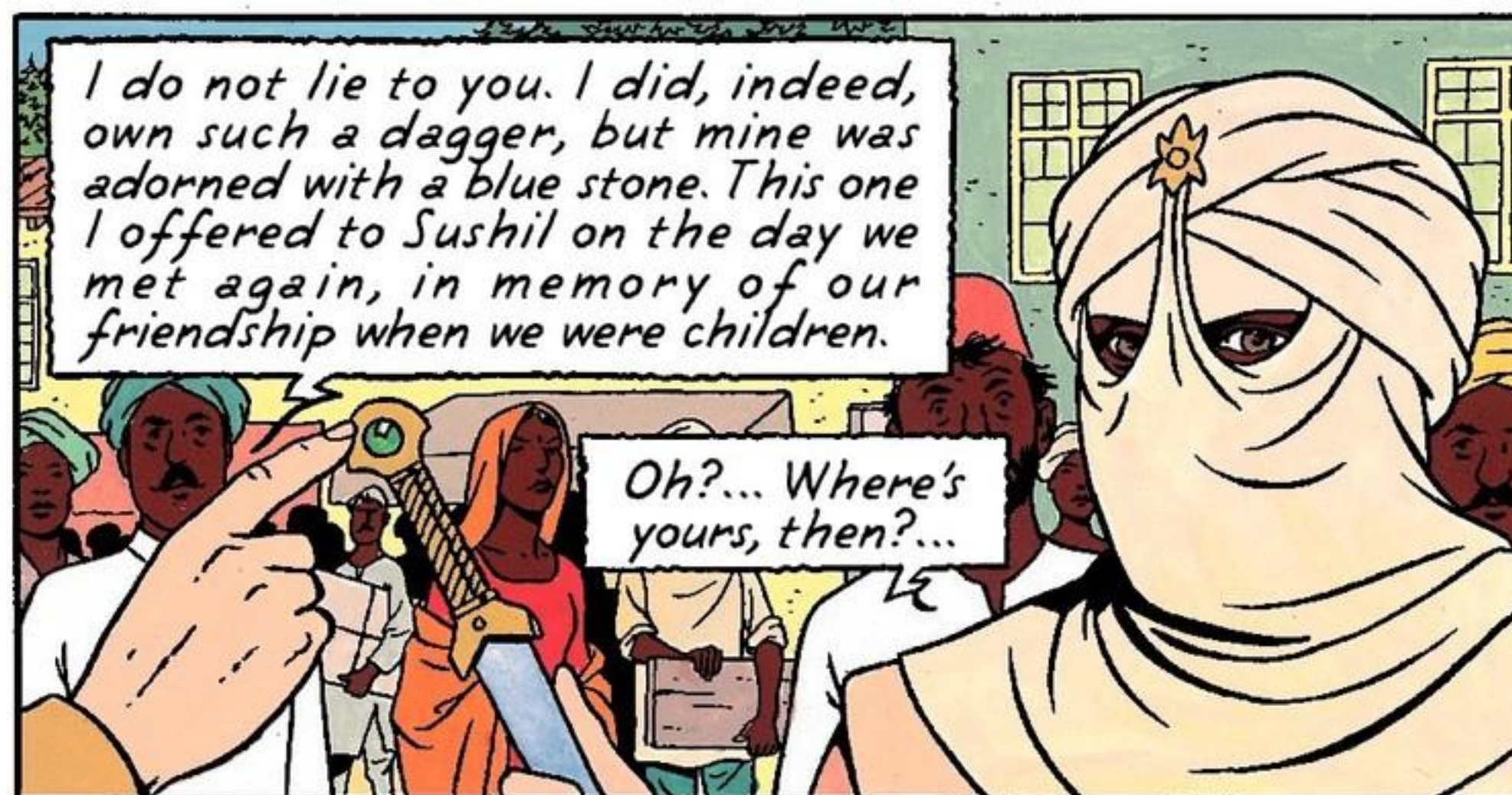
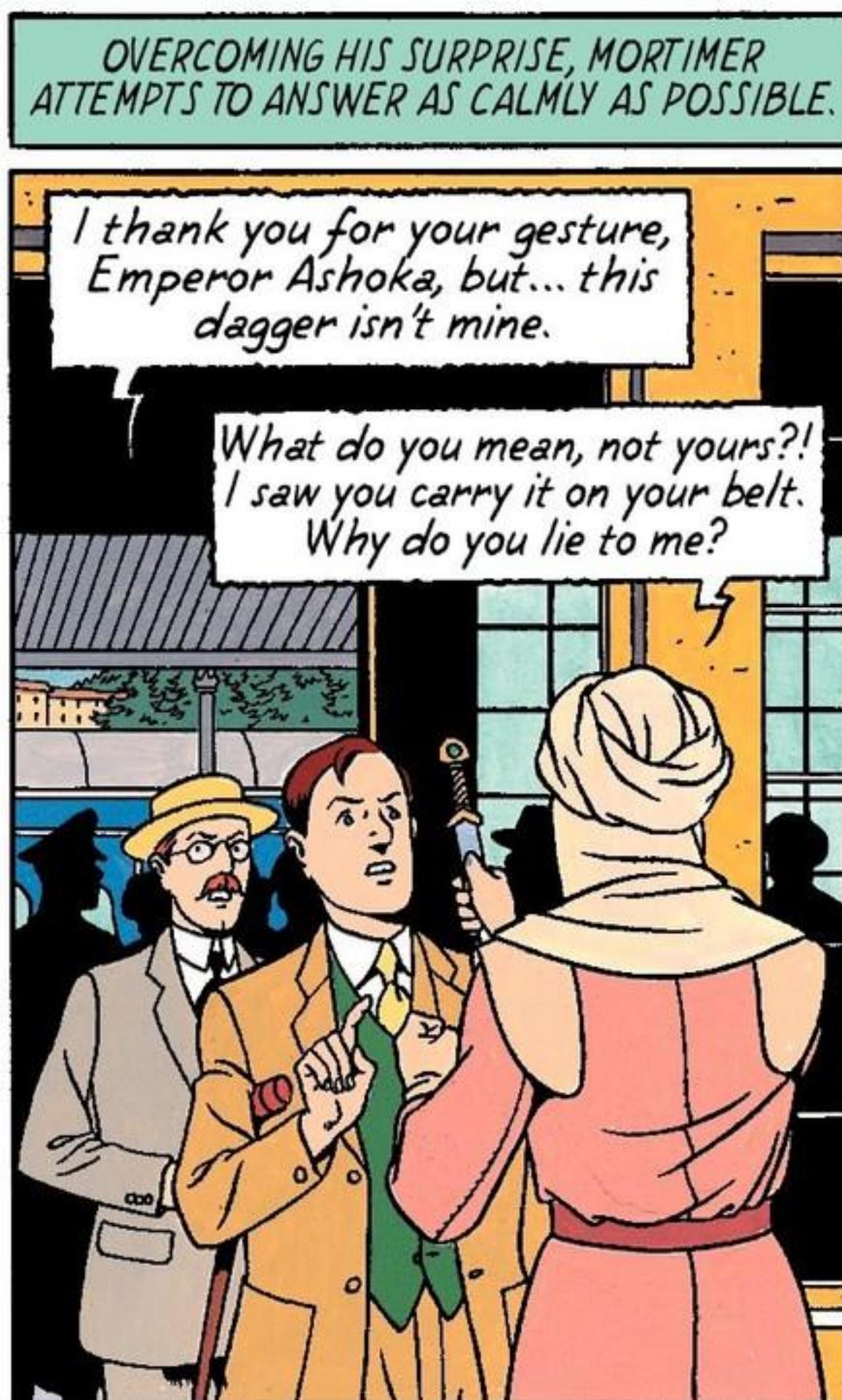
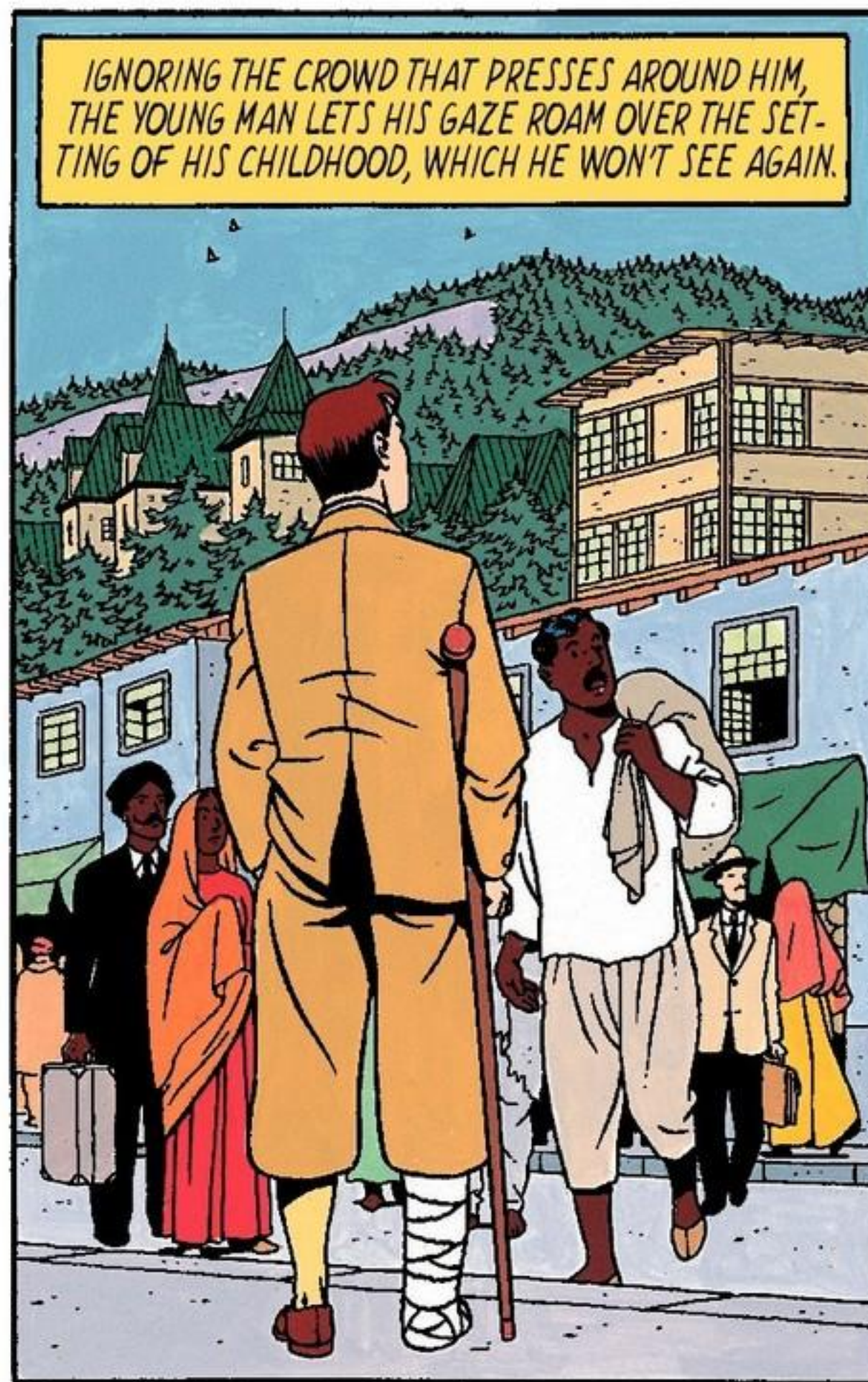
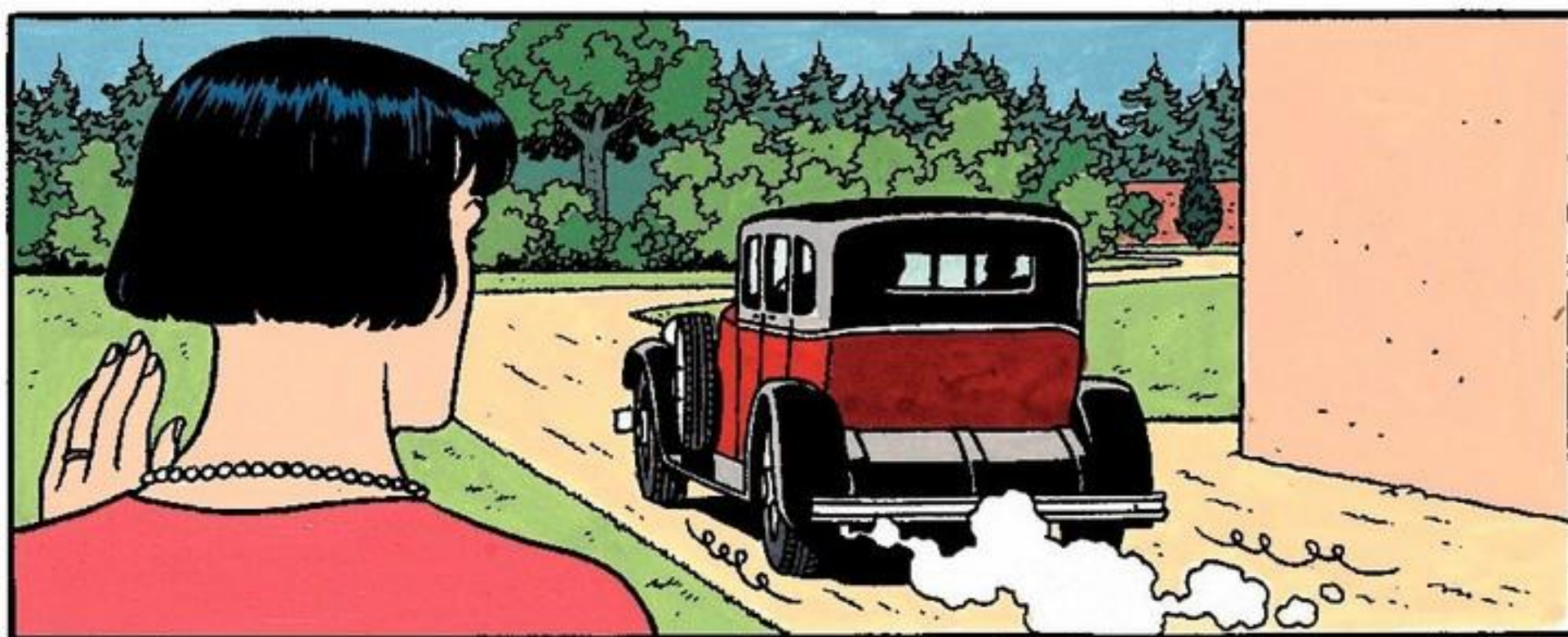
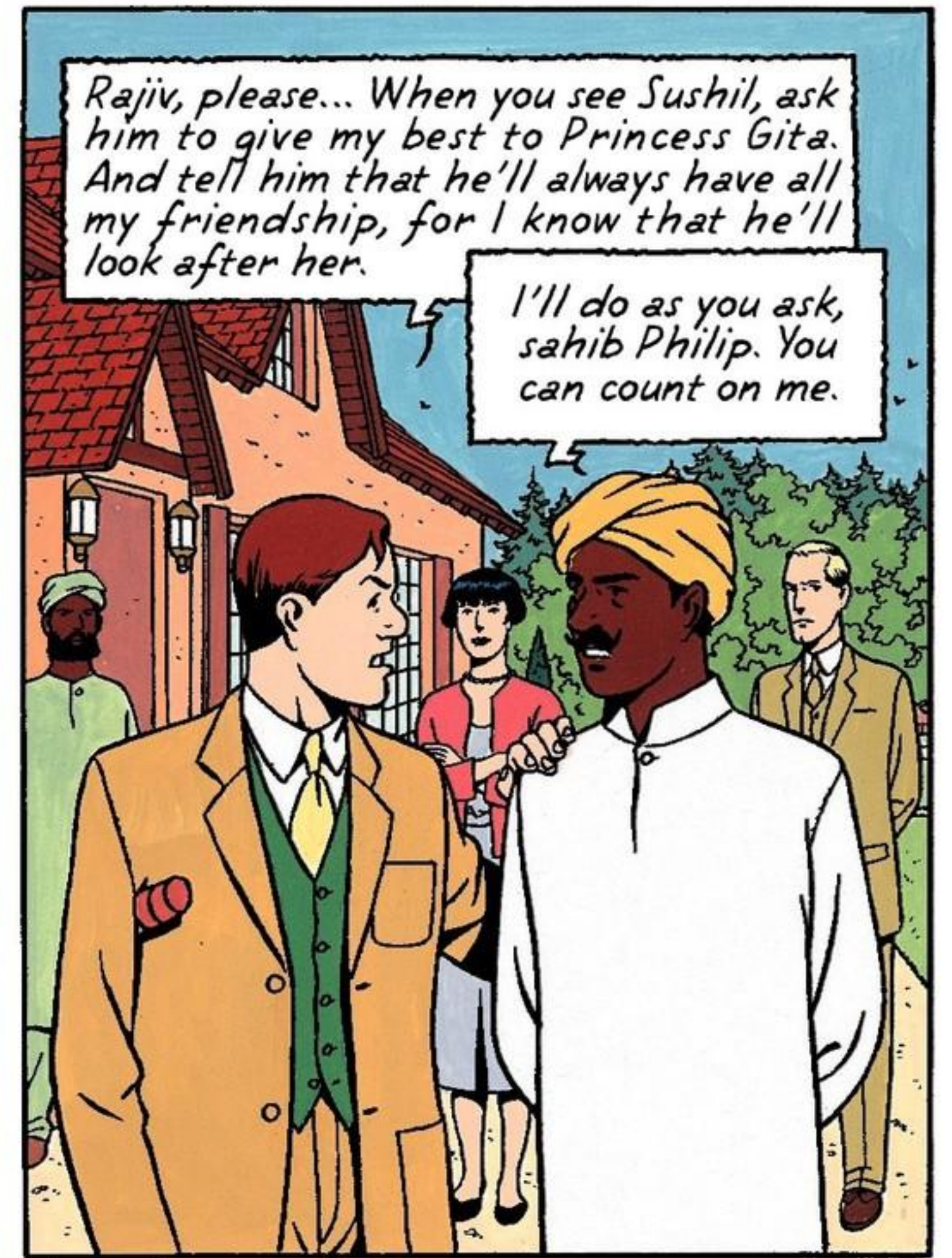


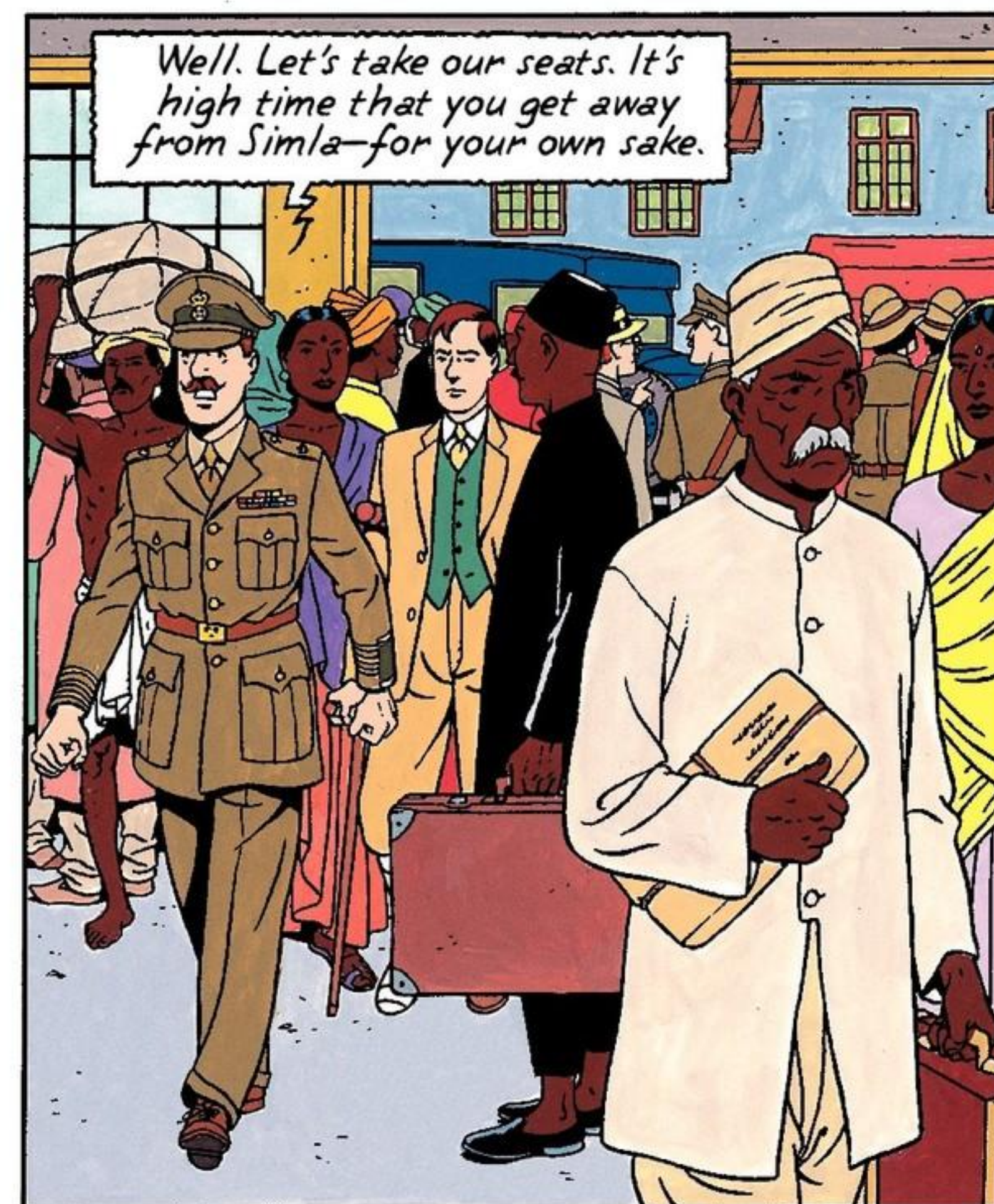


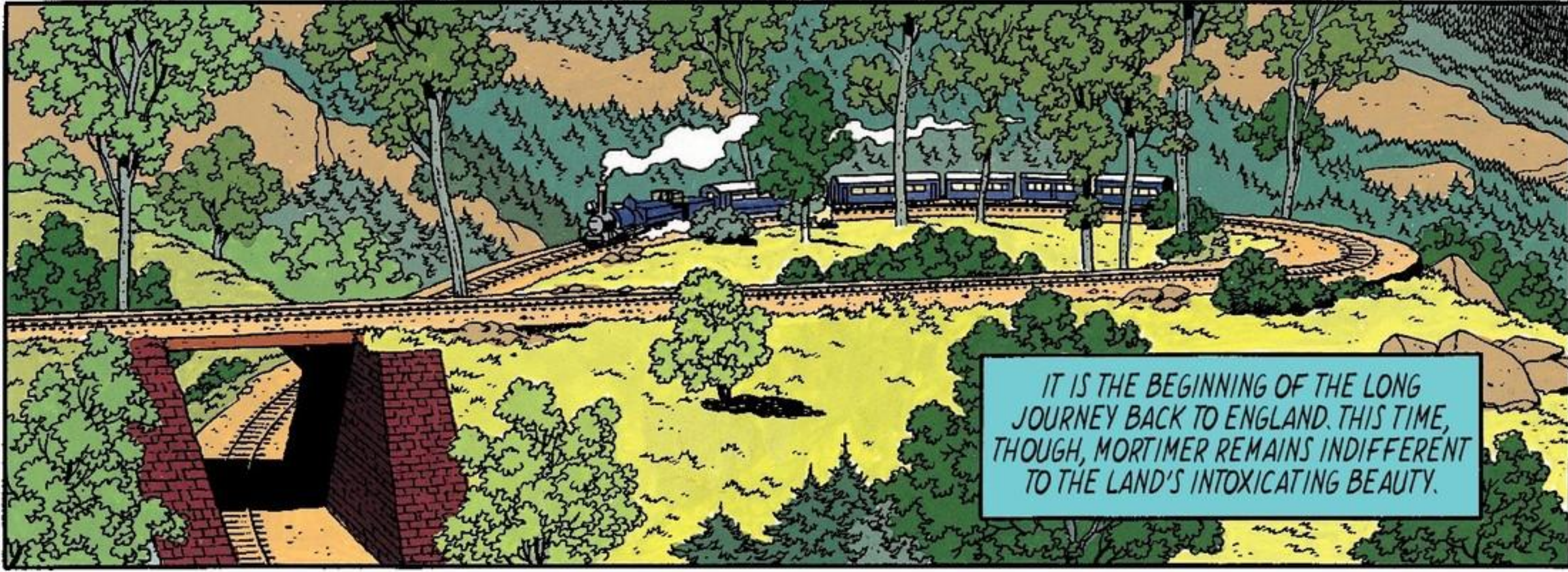










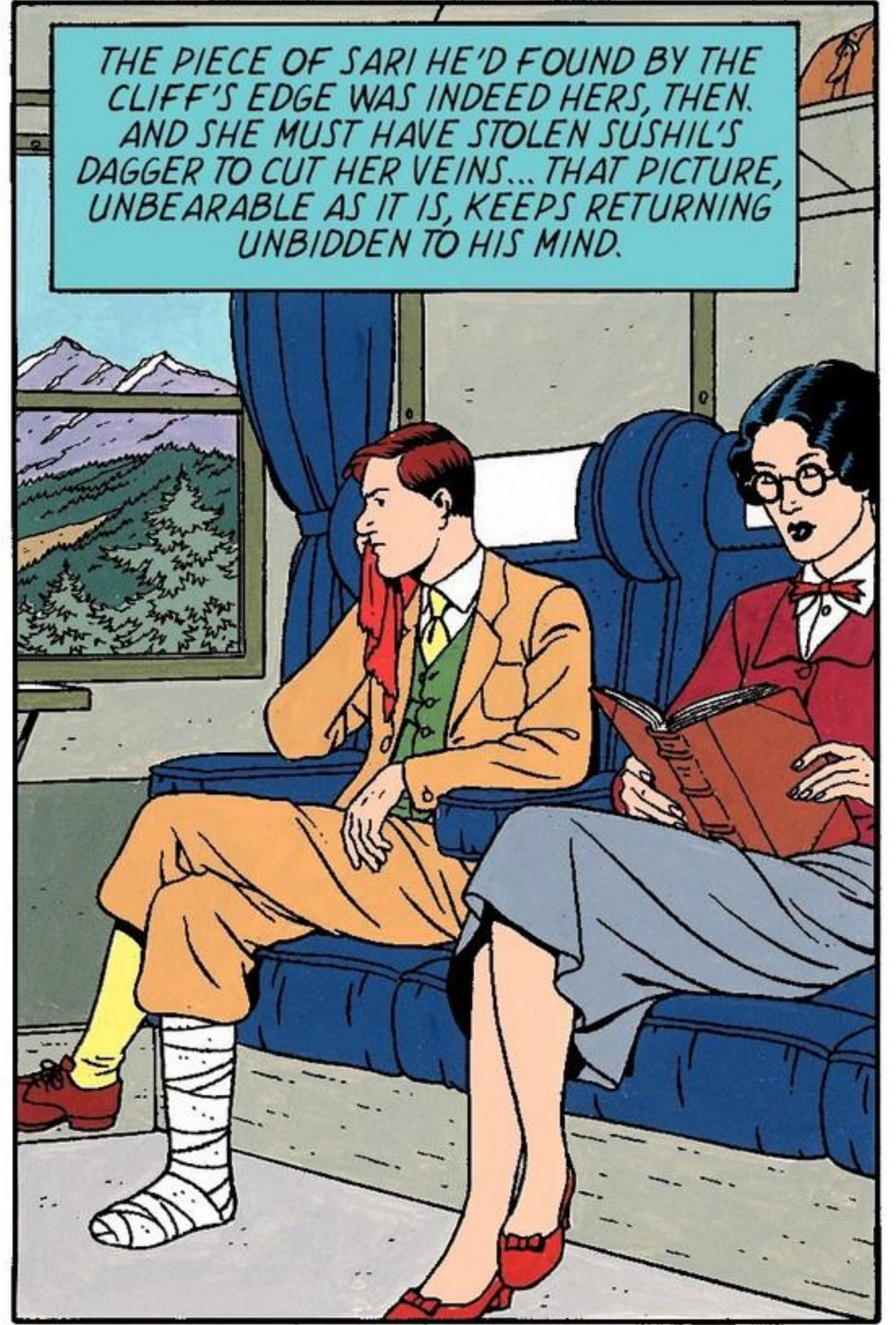


IT IS THE BEGINNING OF THE LONG JOURNEY BACK TO ENGLAND. THIS TIME, THOUGH, MORTIMER REMAINS INDIFFERENT TO THE LAND'S INTOXICATING BEAUTY.



HE CANNOT ACCEPT THAT SWEET GITA COULD HAVE LEFT THIS WORLD. AND WHAT'S MORE, BECAUSE OF HIM! HOW COULD SHE HAVE BELIEVED THAT HE MIGHT HAVE FALLEN IN LOVE WITH STUPID AGATHA? HIM?

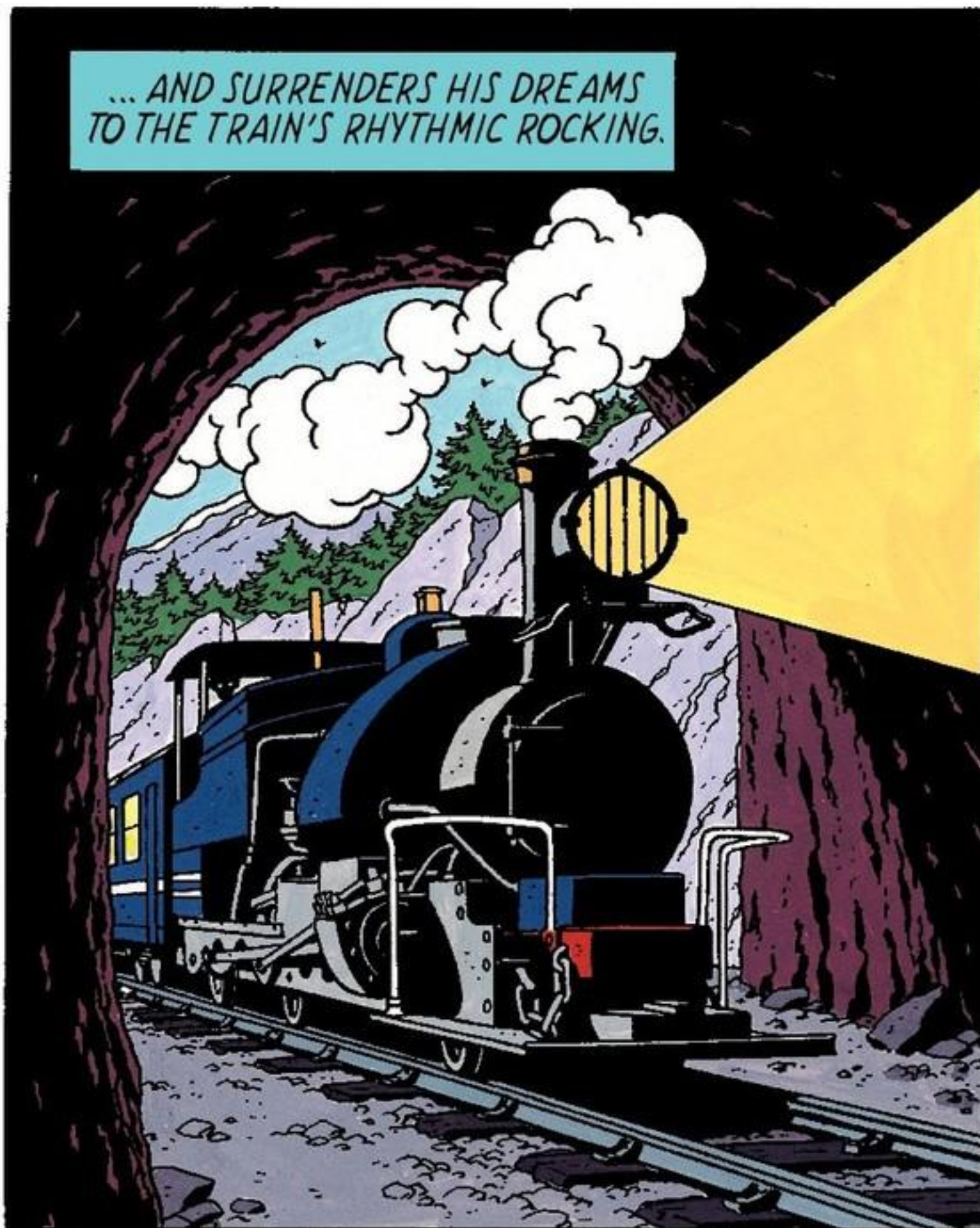
RRRRR...



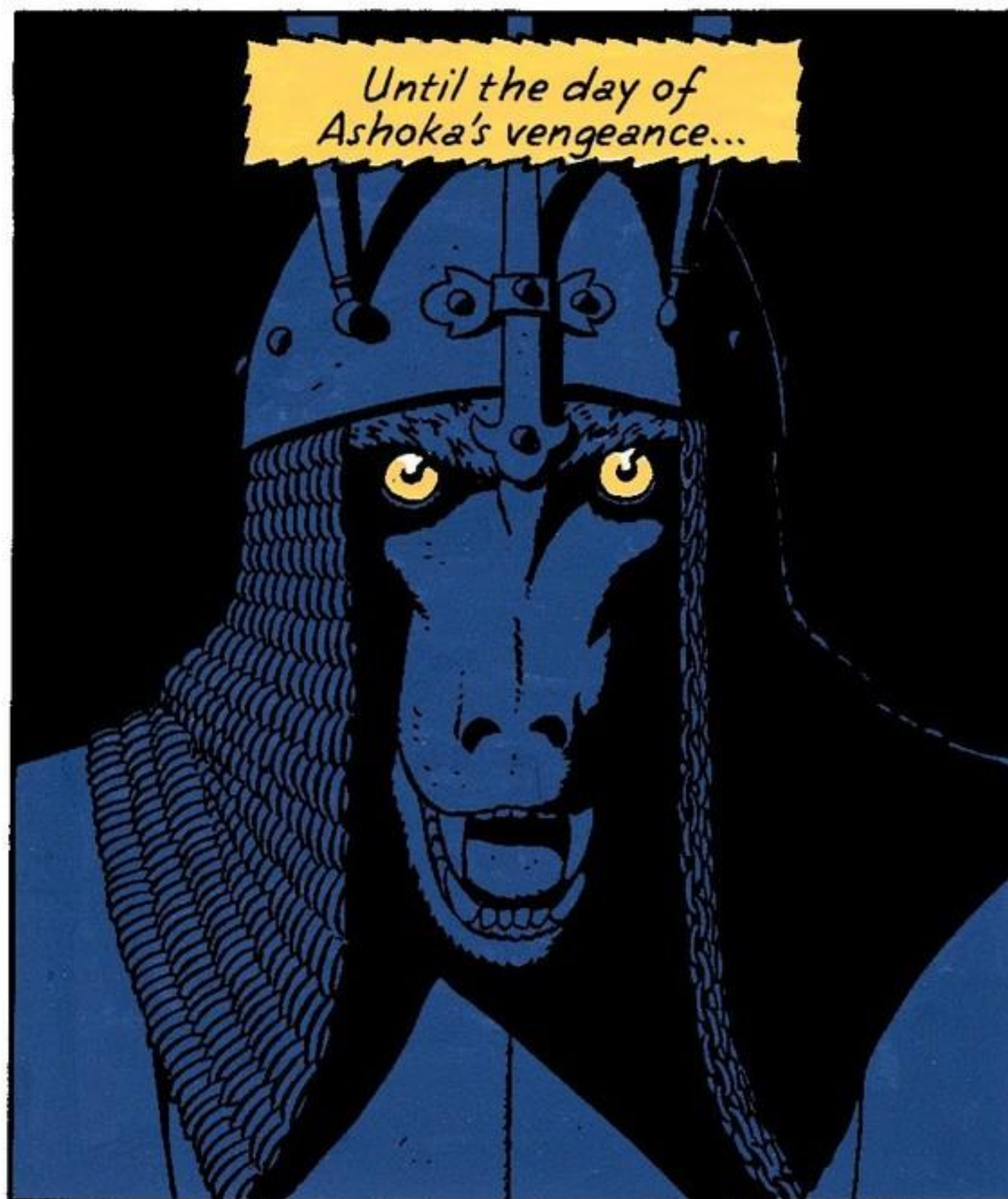
THE PIECE OF SARI HE'D FOUND BY THE CLIFF'S EDGE WAS INDEED HERS, THEN. AND SHE MUST HAVE STOLEN SUSHIL'S DAGGER TO CUT HER VEINS... THAT PICTURE, UNBEARABLE AS IT IS, KEEPS RETURNING UNBIDDEN TO HIS MIND.



EXHAUSTED BY THE PAINFUL EMOTIONS WRACKING HIM, MORTIMER EVENTUALLY FALLS ASLEEP...



... AND SURRENDERS HIS DREAMS TO THE TRAIN'S RHYTHMIC ROCKING.

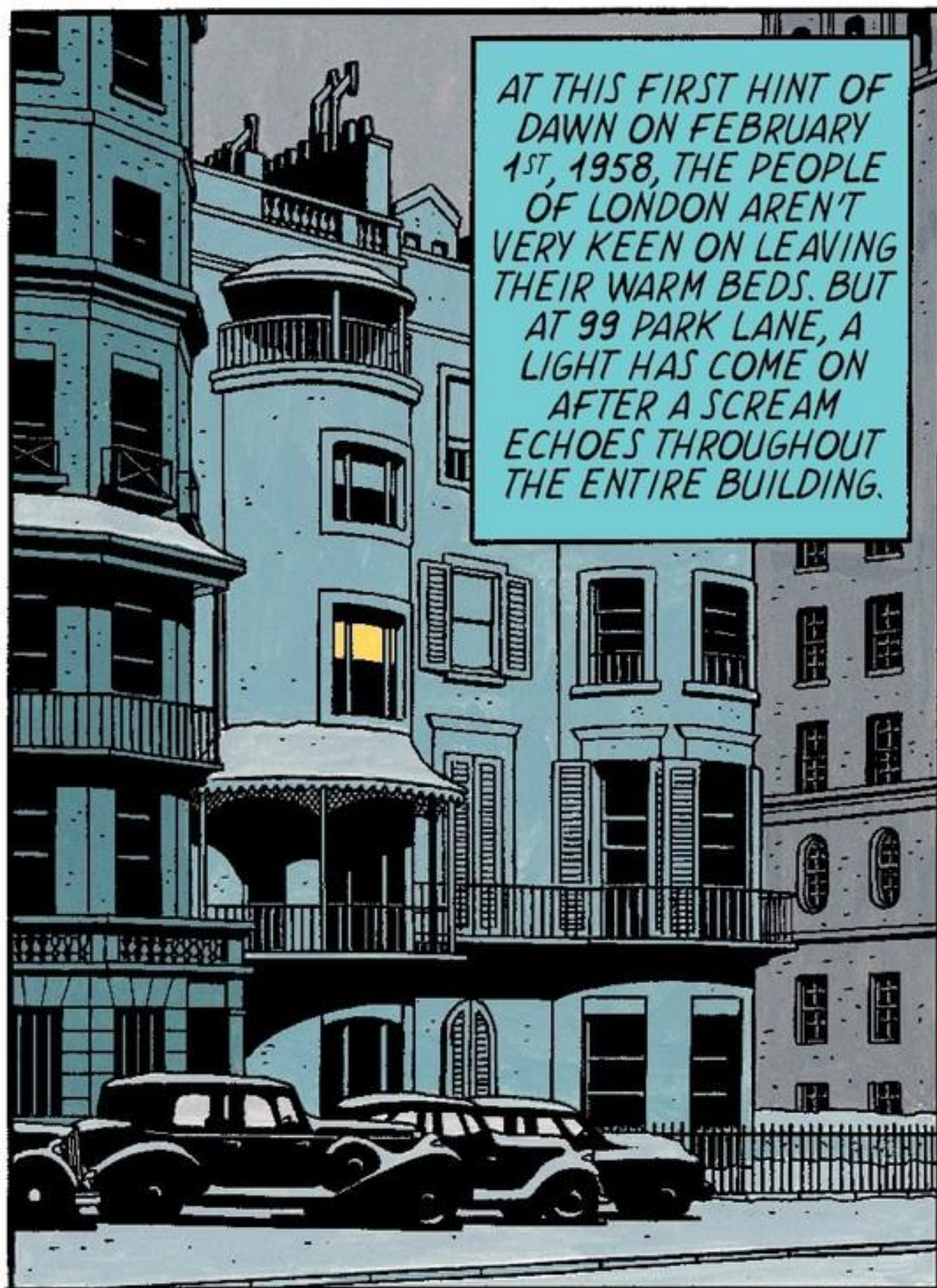


Until the day of Ashoka's vengeance...



... may guilt eat away at your soul, Mortimer!

NO-O-O-O-O!!!



AT THIS FIRST HINT OF DAWN ON FEBRUARY 1ST, 1958, THE PEOPLE OF LONDON AREN'T VERY KEEN ON LEAVING THEIR WARM BEDS. BUT AT 99 PARK LANE, A LIGHT HAS COME ON AFTER A SCREAM ECHOES THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE BUILDING.



Philip! What's going on?

No!...



No! I didn't kill her! Why would I ever want to do such a thing?!

Philip! Calm down!



Ashoka! He's back! He wants revenge!

Come on, old chap! Snap out of it! You're in London...

...and that blasted Ashoka must have been dead for ages now!



Good heavens! It's that old nightmare that came back to haunt me again.



It's been a few years since you had it last.

True... And yet it seemed more real than ever. I'm really sorry I woke you up.



Think nothing of it. Besides, the sun's rising—we might as well do the same. I'll call Mrs Benson. A nice breakfast will do us a world of good!

Excellent idea!

HALF AN HOUR LATER, MRS BENSON HAS FINISHED SERVING BREAKFAST.



By the way, Philip, aren't you leaving today for Brussels to join the British Pavilion team?

Indeed...



The structural work is almost finished. We can now start with the inside layout. It won't be easy to compete with the Americans, Soviets and Belgians, who won't want to be outdone...



Everyone is already saying that this Universal Exposition will be one to remember.

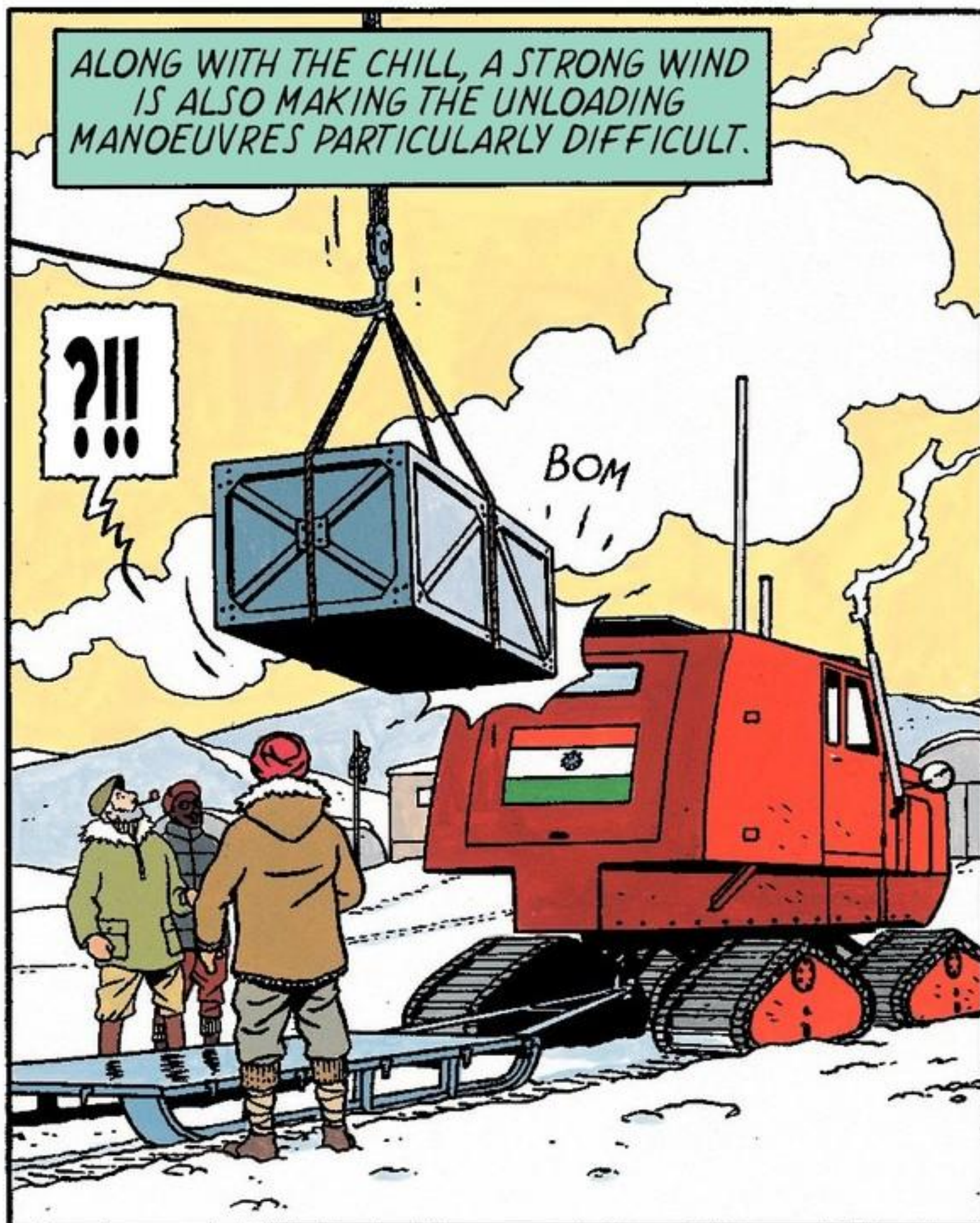
Well, I, for one, look forward to seeing the result of your efforts. I'm still hoping I can hop over to Brussels in a week or so.

WHILE THE TWO FRIENDS CHAT ON, SNOW BEGINS TO FALL SOFTLY OVER THE BRITISH CAPITAL.





AT THE BEGINNING OF MARCH, SUMMER IS FAR FROM WARM IN ANTARCTICA, AS THE INDIAN SCIENTIFIC TEAM THAT'S UNLOADING ITS EQUIPMENT AT THE BRITISH HALLEY STATION THAT DAY FINDS OUT.



ALONG WITH THE CHILL, A STRONG WIND IS ALSO MAKING THE UNLOADING MANOEUVRES PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT.



BY SHIVA! Can't you be more careful, you clueless dolt?!!!



Your foreman looks somewhat nervous, Professor Anartapur. Are these containers filled with china or something?!

Er... No... Merely panels for building huts, but... er... with the windows already installed. No doubt the length of the journey made the men short-tempered...



The cold could have something to do with it, too. They mustn't be used to it.

Quite the contrary, Captain! Most of them come from the foothills of the Himalayas, in the north of India. Winters are particularly harsh there. Which is precisely why they were selected for this mission.



Speaking of which, we did what was decided between our governments as part of the cooperation agreement. A cable links your camp directly to our power generator, and we maintain a permanent radio link as well. You can call us if you need anything.



Thanks for your help, Captain. I must leave you now, for our little convoy is ready to depart... I wouldn't want to have to cover the two miles between here and Gondwana on foot!

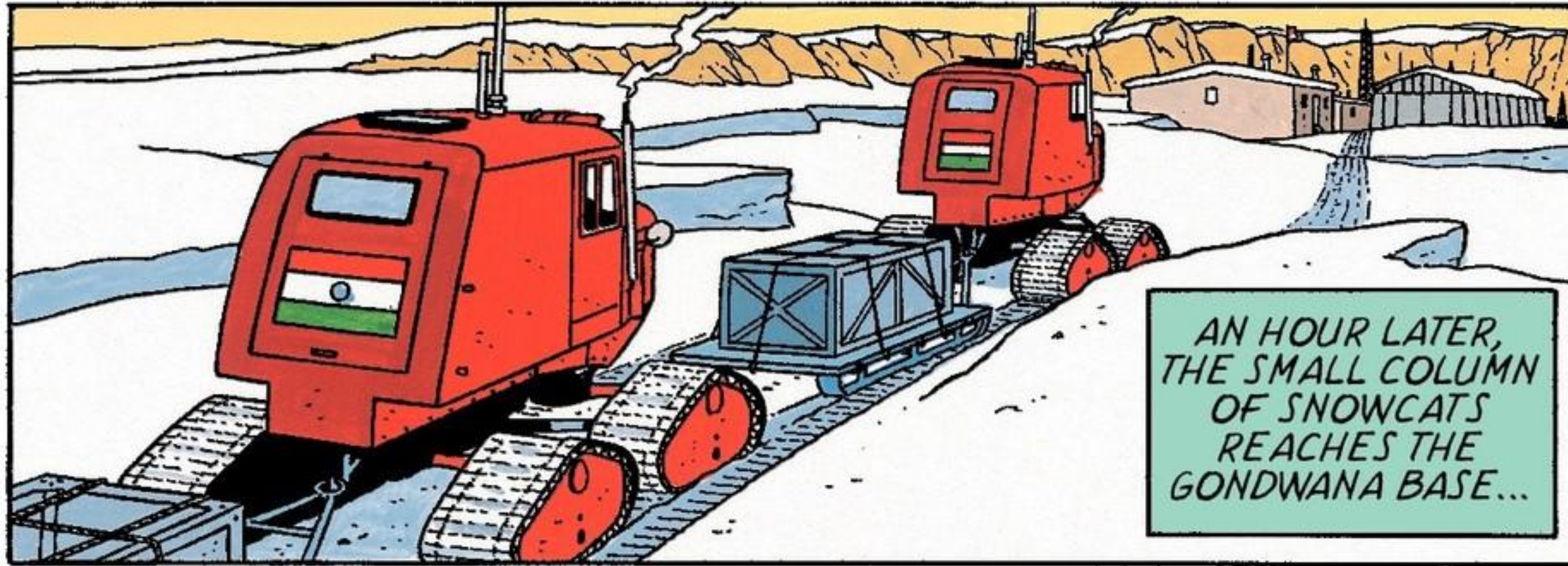
Have a safe trip, Professor. Stop by for tea anytime!

Captain Byrd!

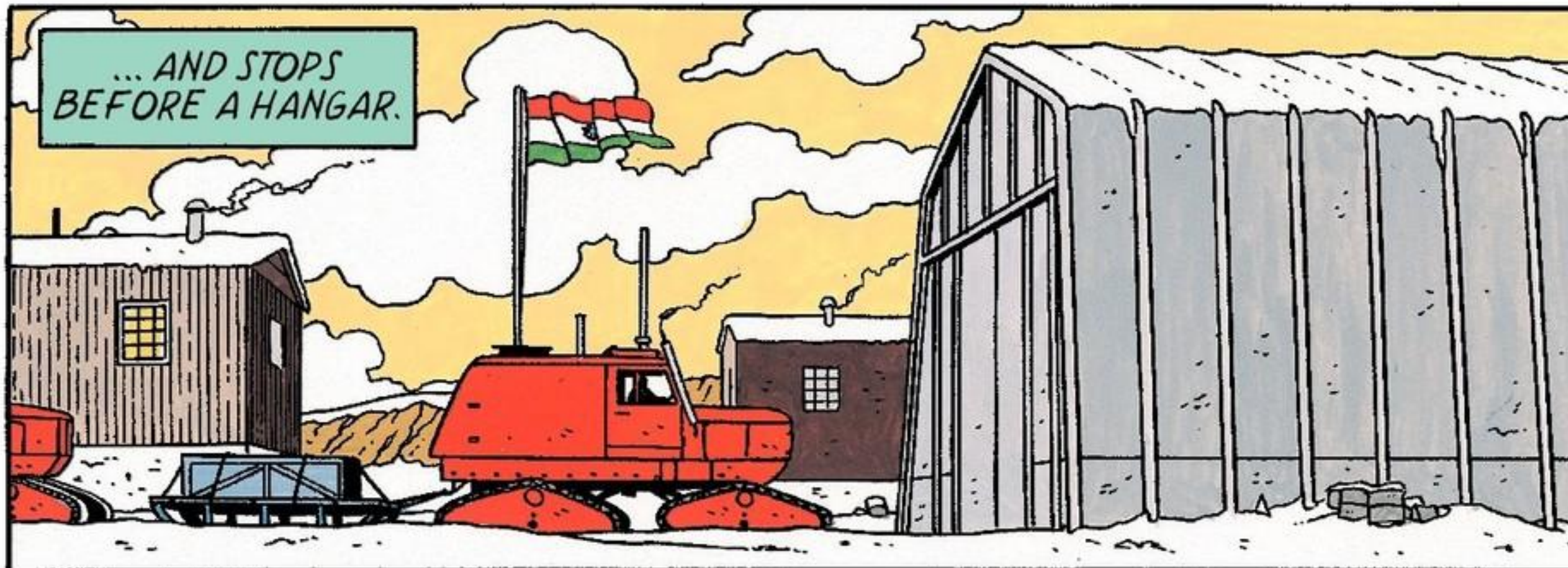


What is it, Brian?

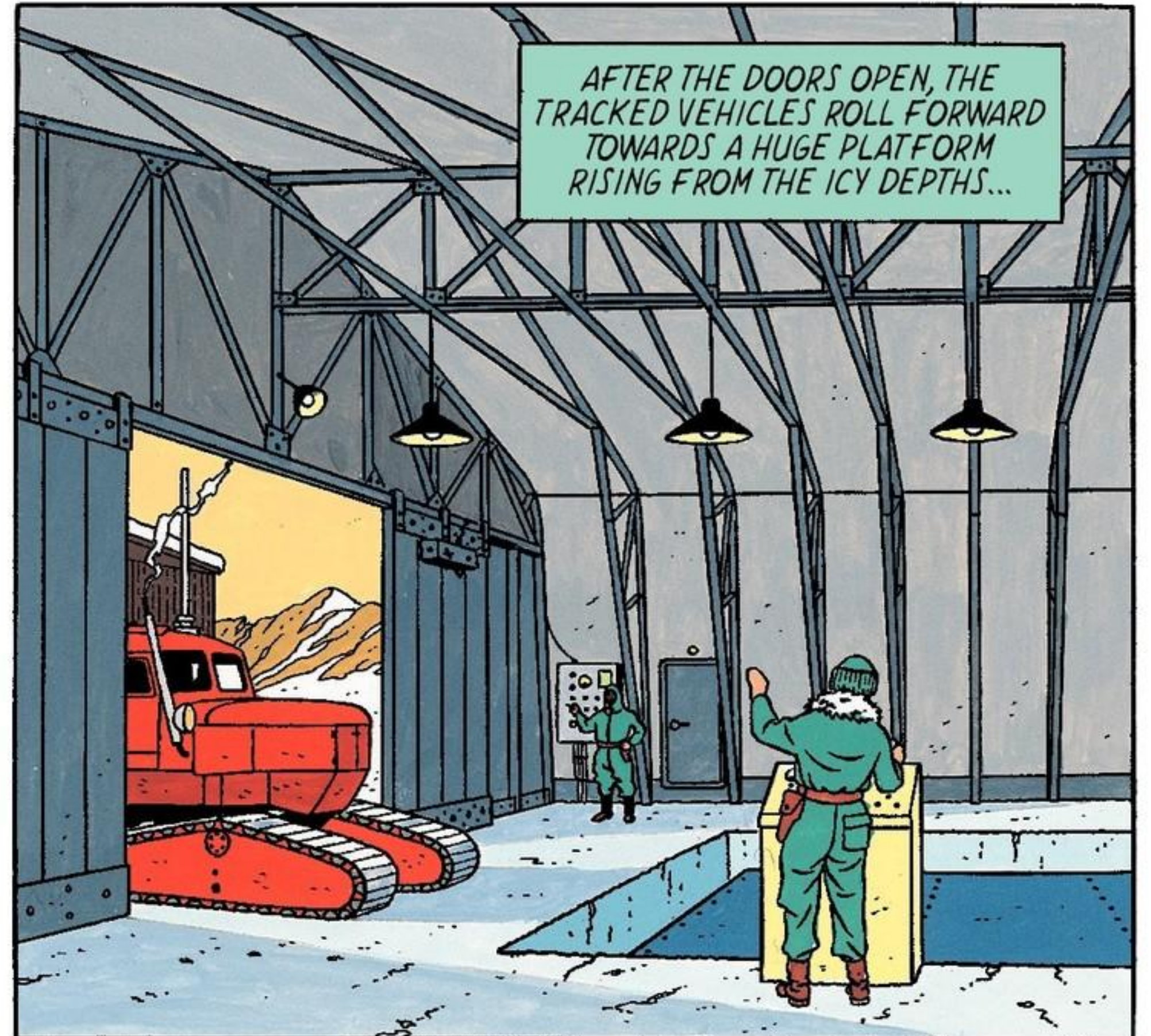
Professor Mortimer just contacted us. He'd like to discuss the last report on the movement of underwater faults with you.



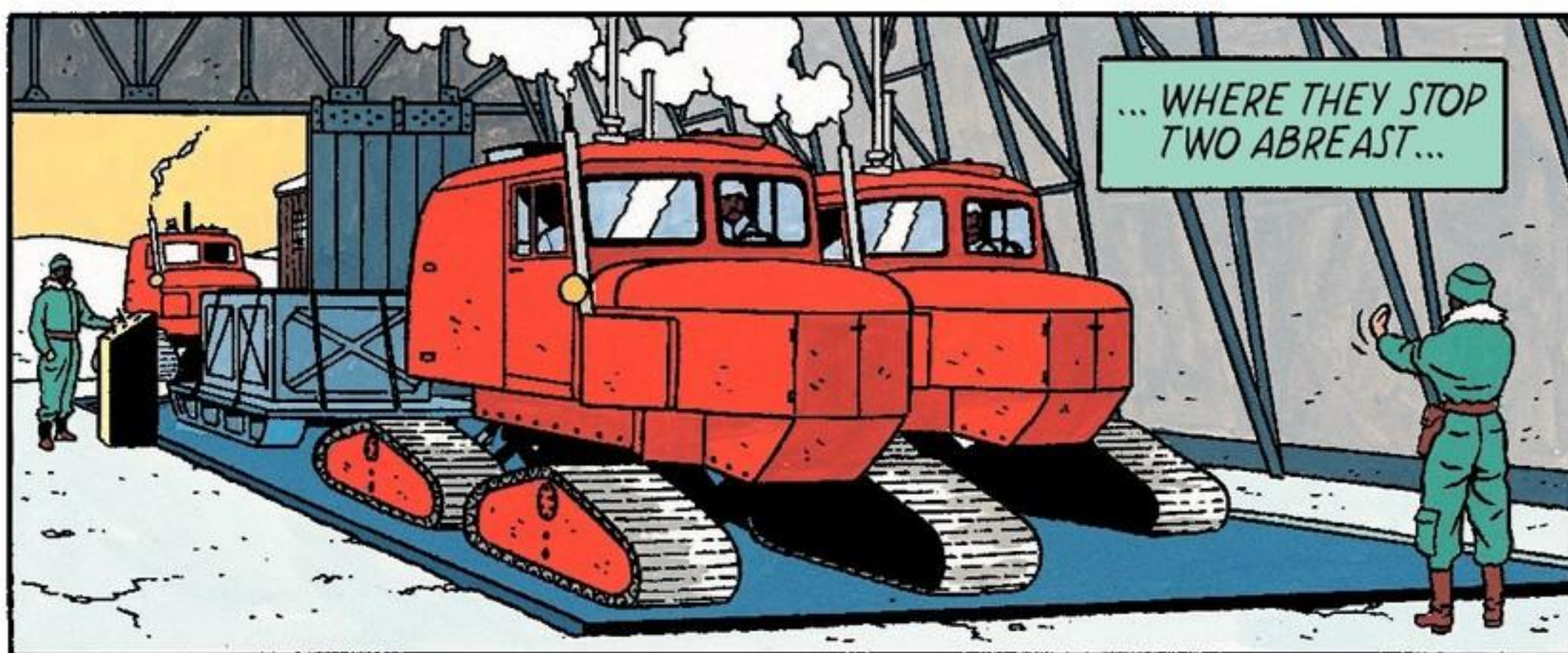
AN HOUR LATER,
THE SMALL COLUMN
OF SNOWCATS
REACHES THE
GONDWANA BASE...



... AND STOPS
BEFORE A HANGAR.



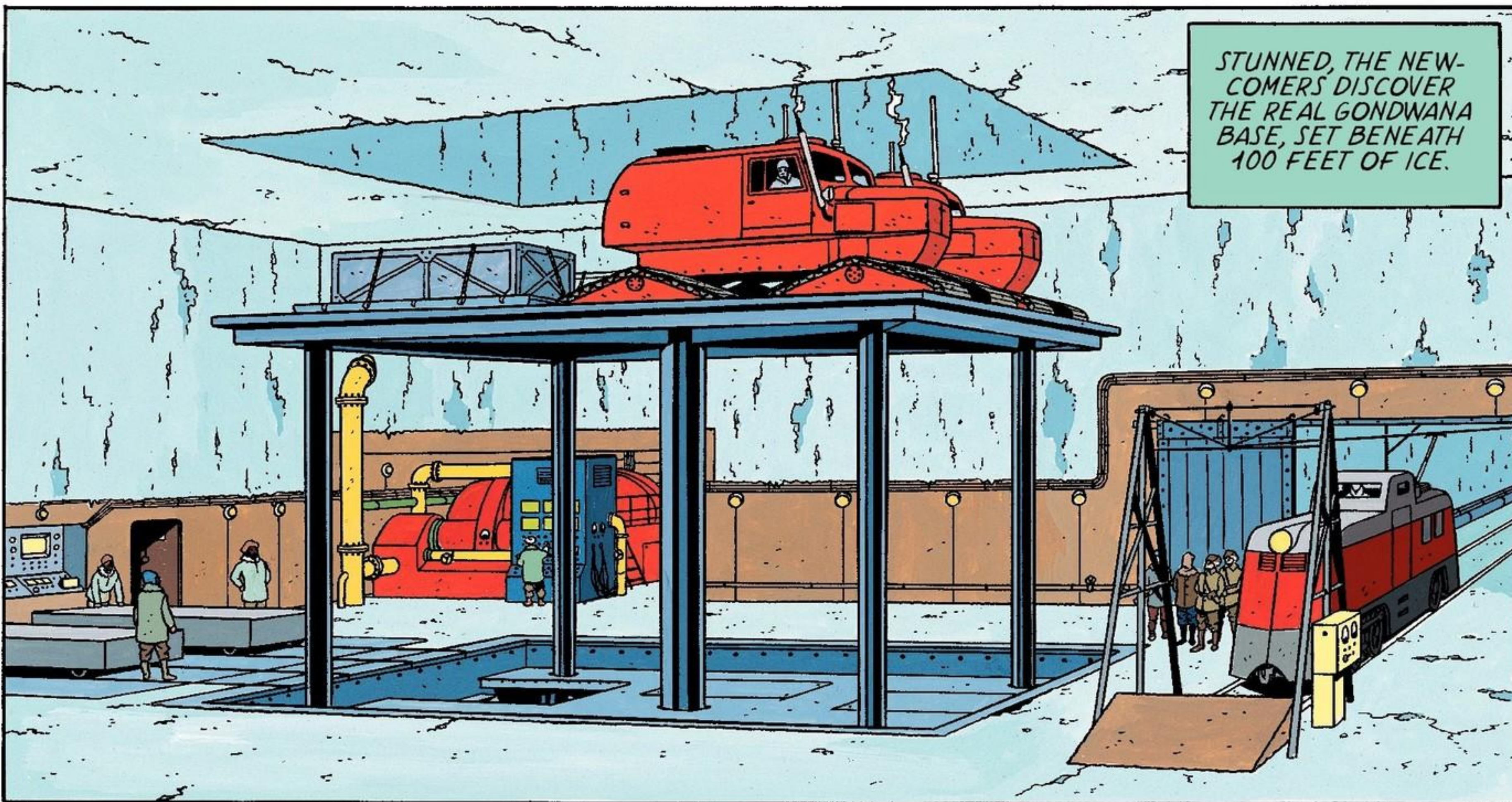
AFTER THE DOORS OPEN, THE
TRACKED VEHICLES ROLL FORWARD
TOWARDS A HUGE PLATFORM
RISING FROM THE ICY DEPTHS...



... WHERE THEY STOP
TWO ABREAST...



THUS LOADED, THE PLATFORM SILENTLY SINKS INTO THE ICE...



STUNNED, THE NEW-
COMERS DISCOVER
THE REAL GONDWANA
BASE, SET BENEATH
100 FEET OF ICE.



You got here just
in time, Professor
Anartapur. Major
Varich's train just
arrived.



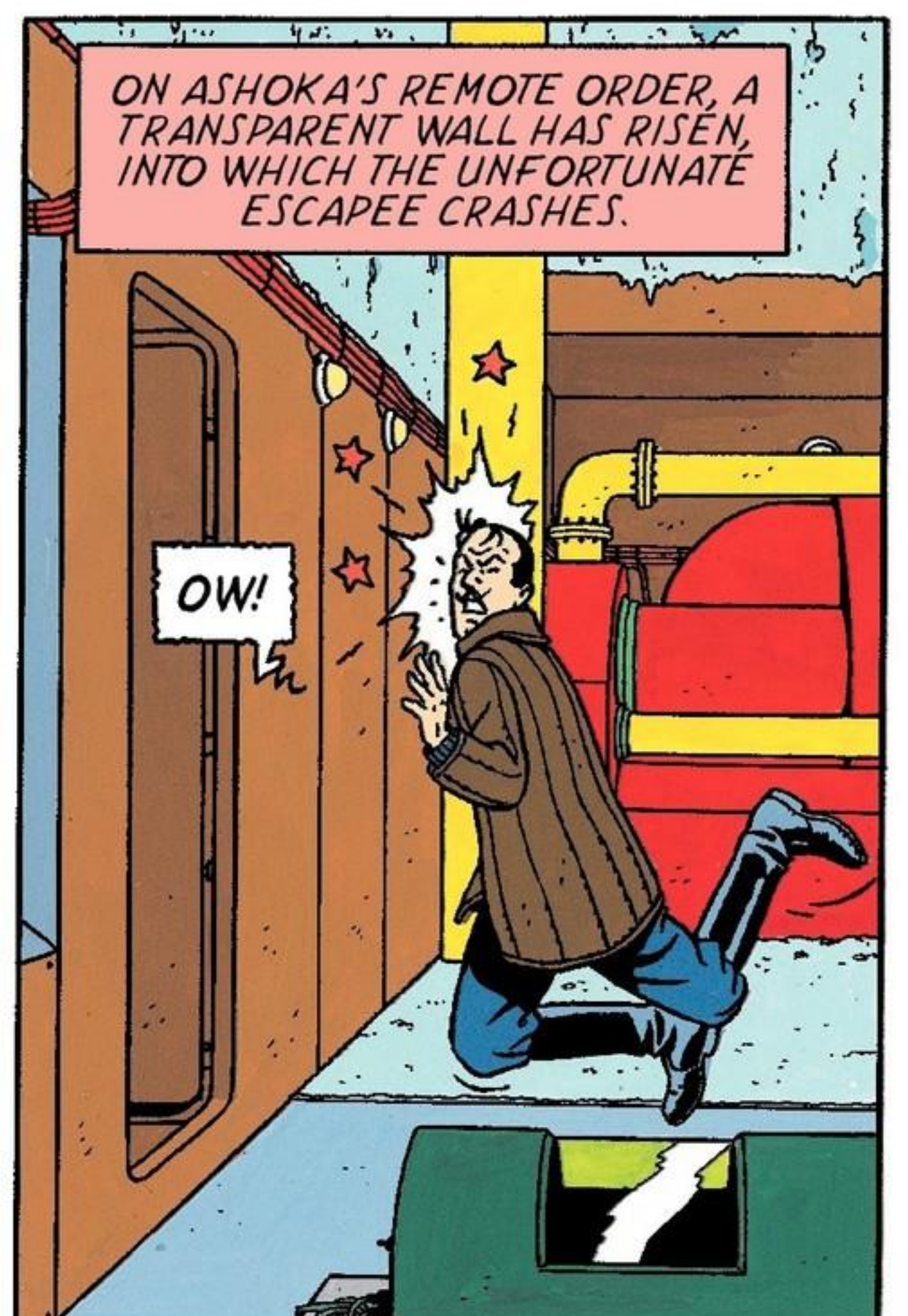
Good day, Major. So, are you
bringing our test subject to us?

As promised, Professor. Your
emperor will be satisfied.

I hope so!



What are you waiting
for? Take his hood off!





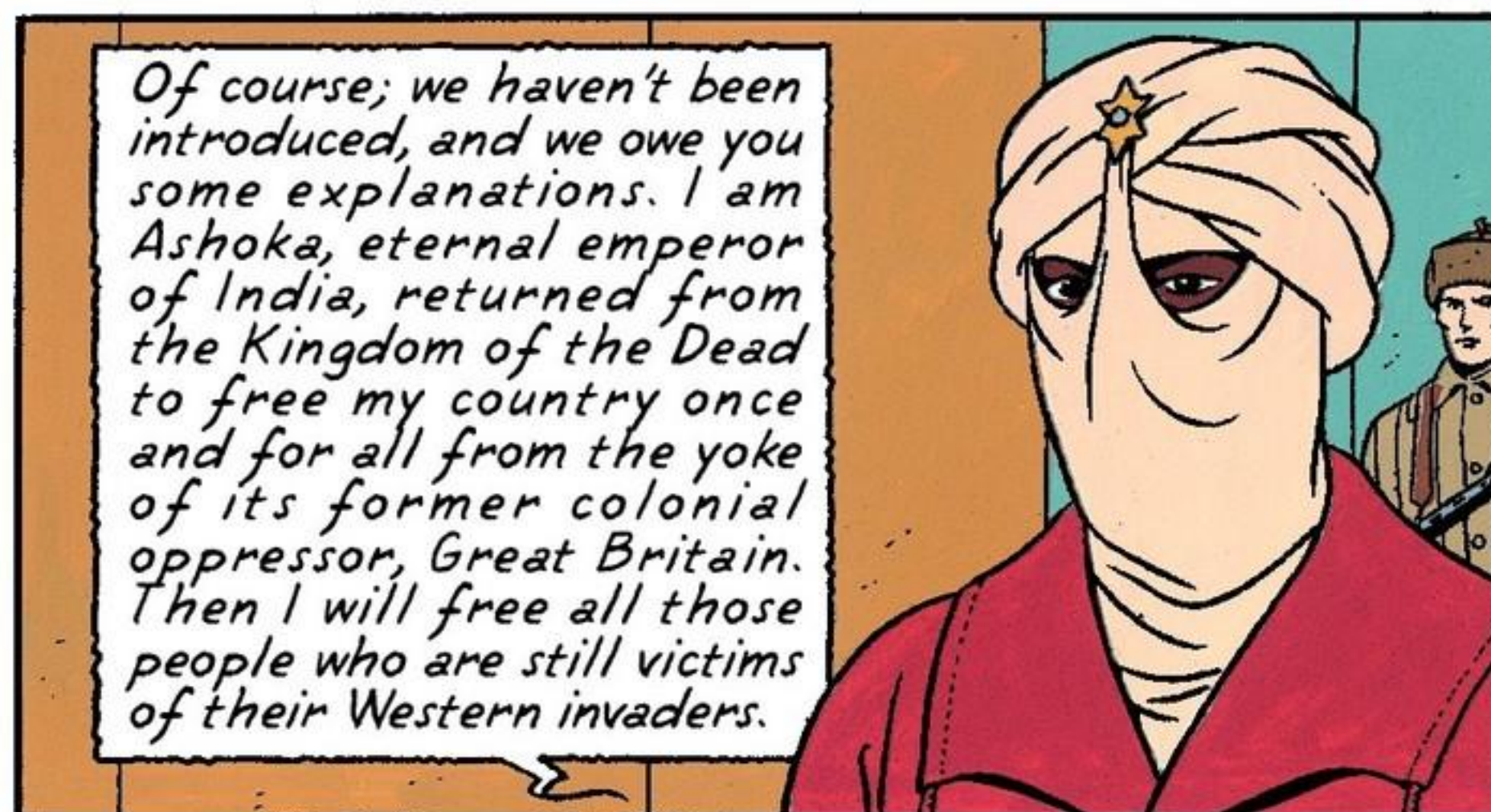
KNOCKED HALF UNCONSCIOUS BY THE IMPACT, OLRUK UNDERSTANDS THAT HE'S NOW INSIDE A KIND OF INVISIBLE PRISON.



You must have realised, Colonel, that the electromagnetic cage surrounding you is proof against your ridiculous tantrums. And since you've got my monkeys rather riled up, it'll be better for you if I keep you inside for the moment.



What's all this about? Who are you, anyway? And why did you get me out of my gulag if it was just to keep me prisoner here?!

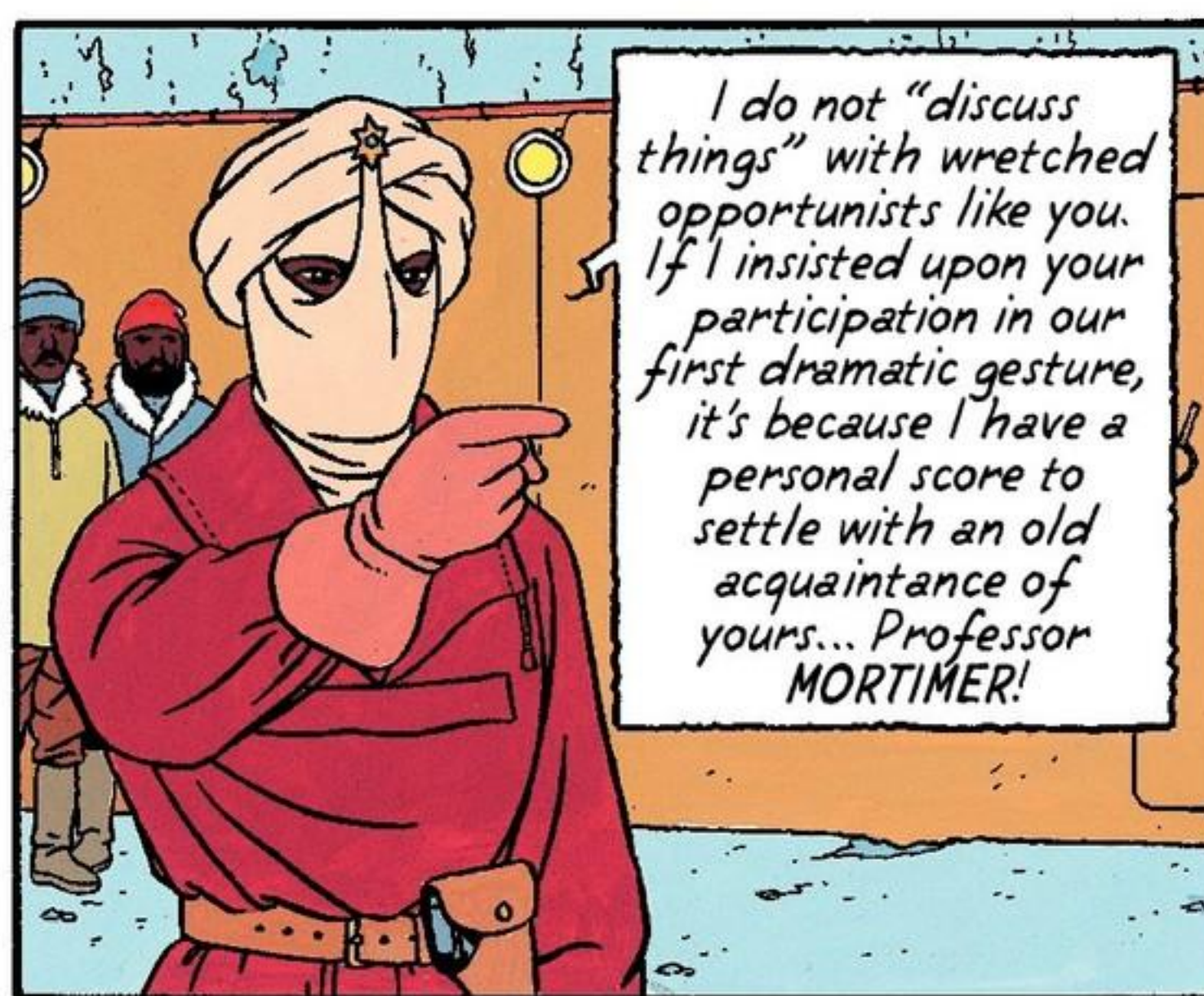


Of course; we haven't been introduced, and we owe you some explanations. I am Ashoka, eternal emperor of India, returned from the Kingdom of the Dead to free my country once and for all from the yoke of its former colonial oppressor, Great Britain. Then I will free all those people who are still victims of their Western invaders.

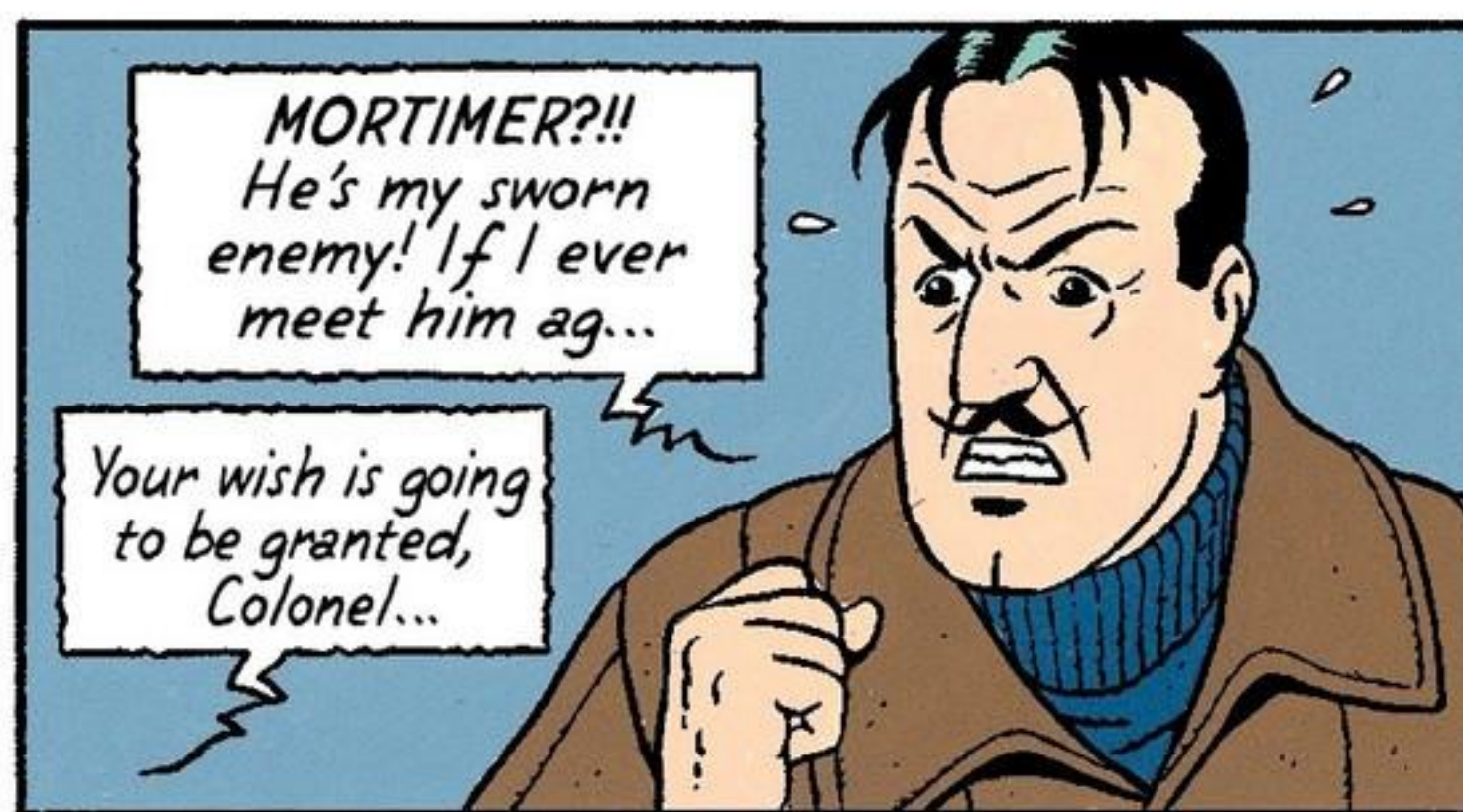


Know, Colonel, that thanks to the scientific knowledge I've accumulated over the centuries, I possess an unprecedented technological advantage. With the funding and logistical support of the gentlemen from the Soviet KGB, I was finally able to perfect the ultimate weapon. Professor Anartapur and I are soon going to test it right here, from this secret base. It's for this test that I had you brought over, because I need your collaboration.

My collaboration?! Why mine in particular? Besides, if you really need my help, why treat me like a prisoner? We could discuss things instead!...



I do not "discuss things" with wretched opportunists like you. If I insisted upon your participation in our first dramatic gesture, it's because I have a personal score to settle with an old acquaintance of yours... Professor MORTIMER!



MORTIMER?! He's my sworn enemy! If I ever meet him ag...

Your wish is going to be granted, Colonel...



In order to fulfil my goals and exact my vengeance at the same time, my weapon needs a living brain—one free of any scruples. What's more, yours is also filled with the hatred you feel towards Mortimer, which makes you the ideal subject! When I learned that your last trouble had led you to be handed over to the Soviets, I asked Major Varich to give you to me as a "gift."



Professor Anartapur will explain the details in due time. Rest for now, for we're going to need you in top shape. Good night, Colonel.

Wait! Don't go! I'll be perfectly happy to help you. Let me out! I'm going to freeze to death here!...



No mercy for the traitors who helped Voronov in his attempt to topple our government.* Besides... Cold is a good thing, really. We need you refreshed tomorrow... Well refreshed!...

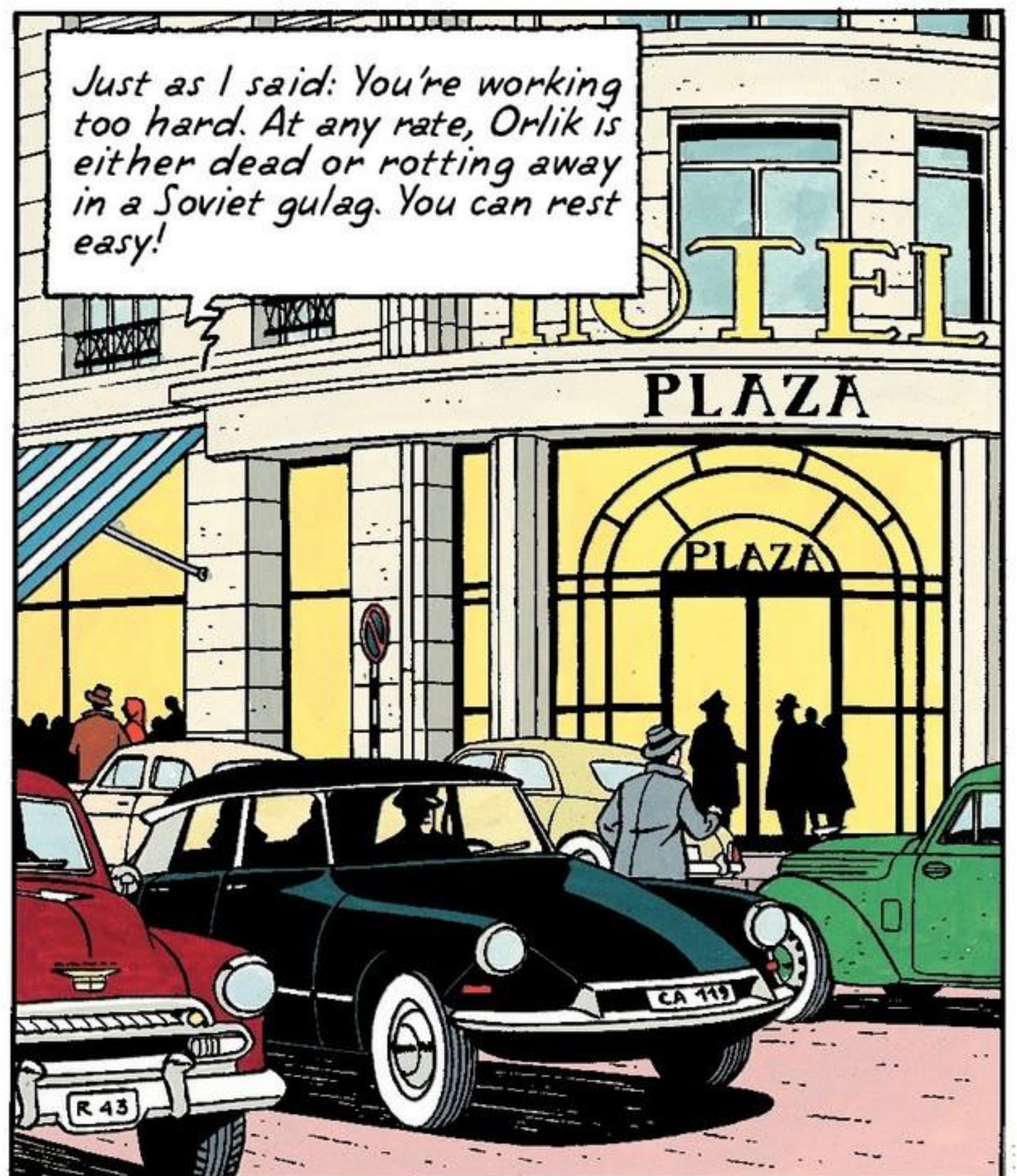
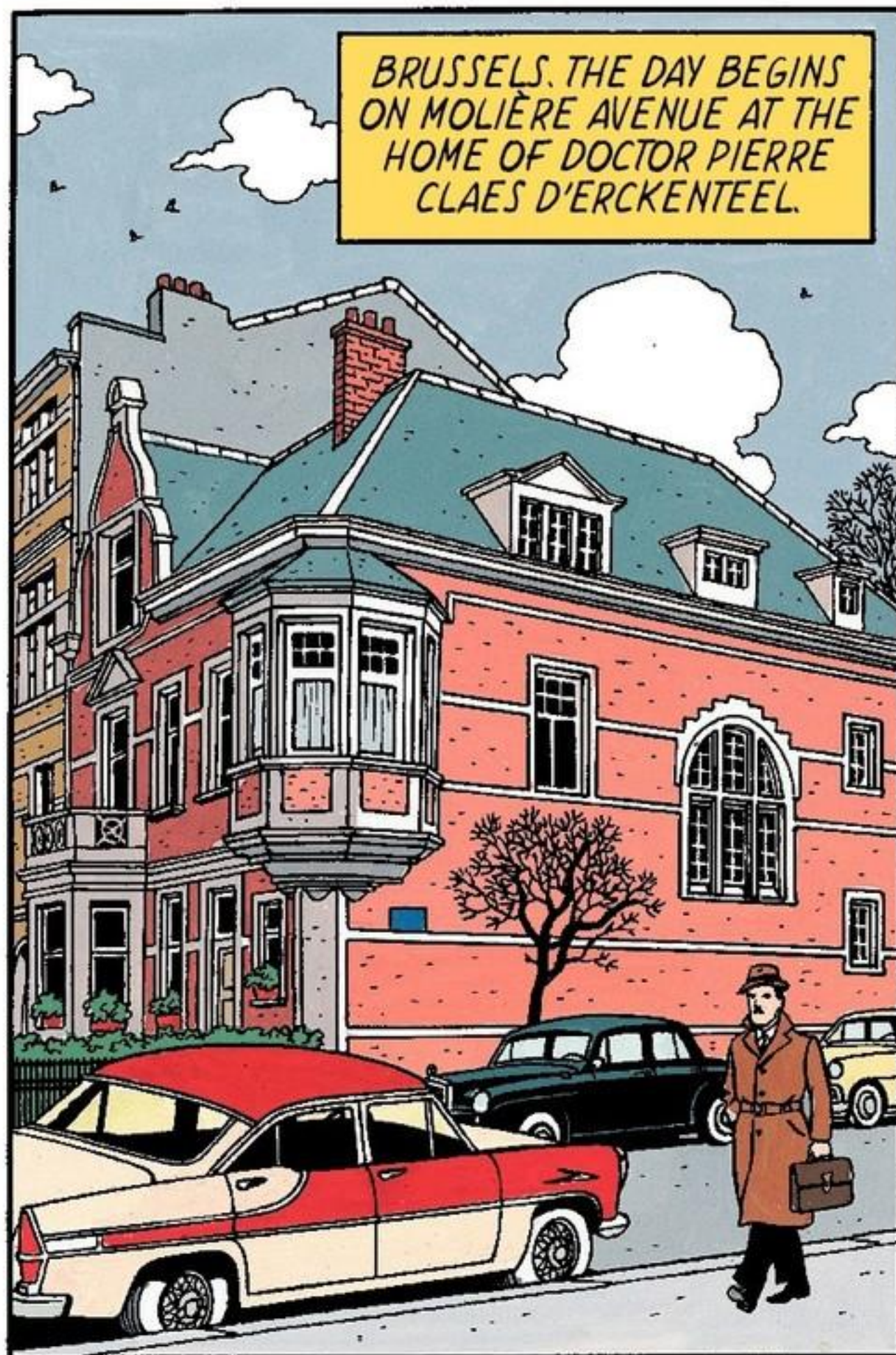


Very, very fresh! Ha, ha, ha!

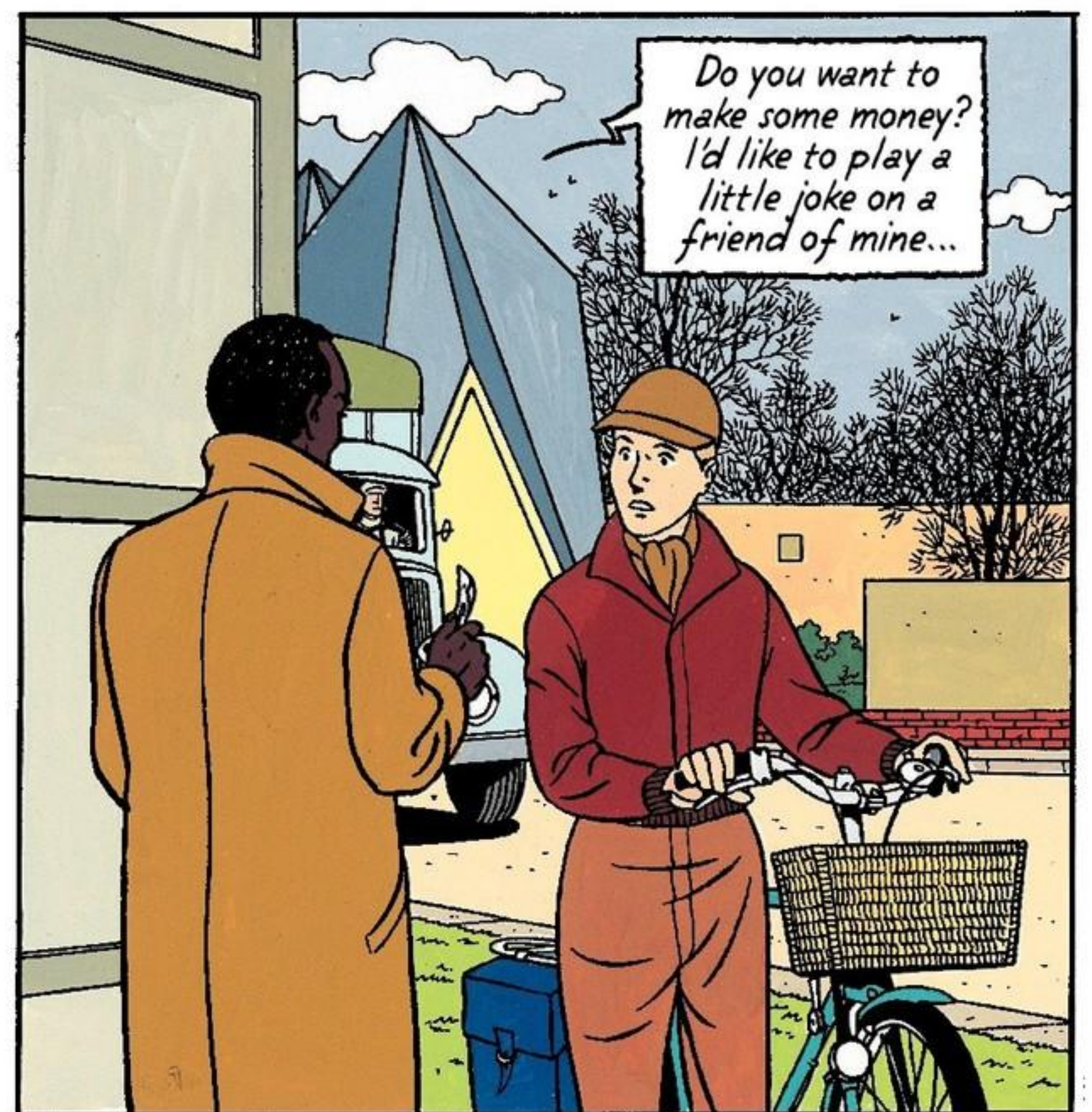
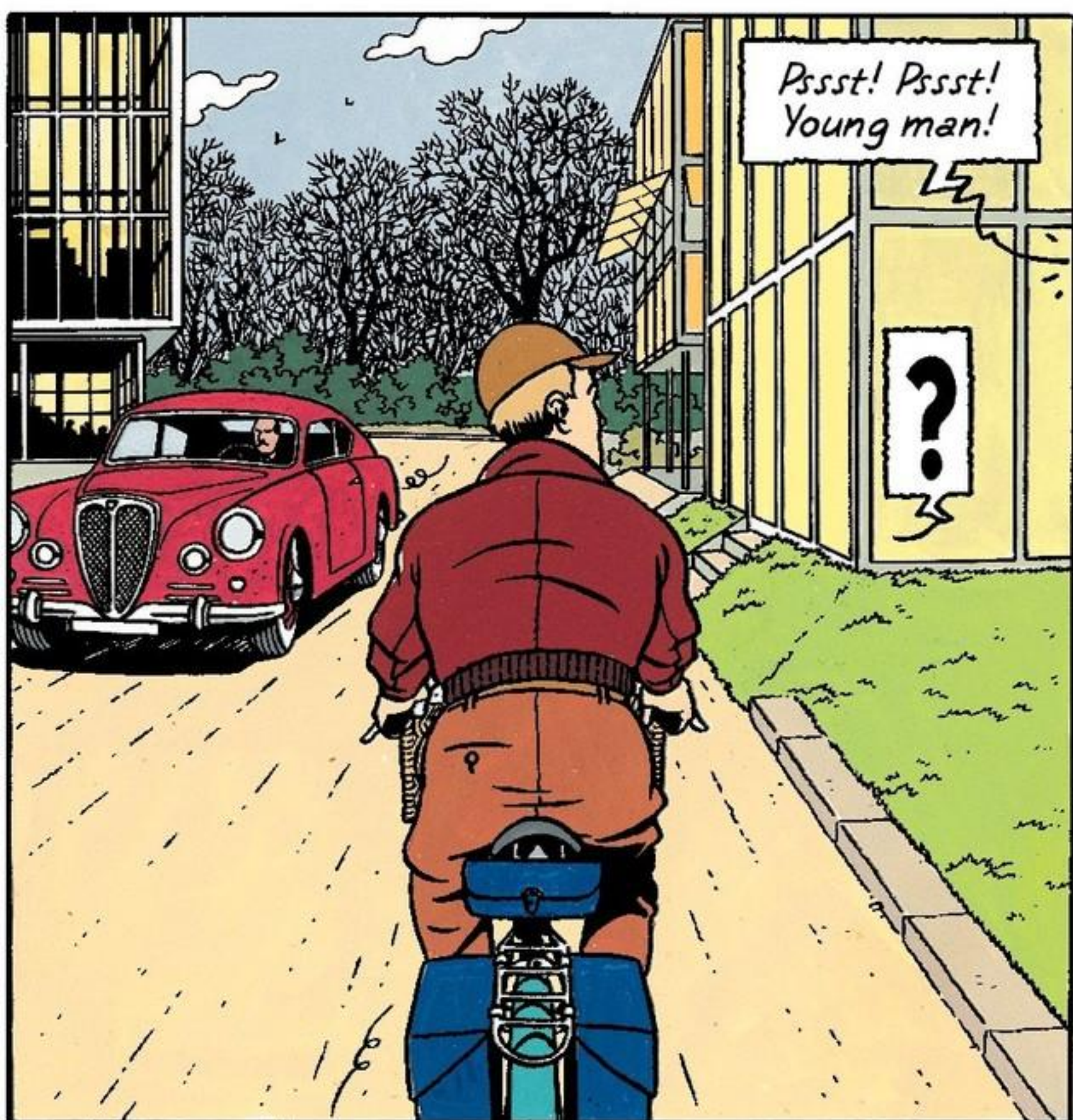
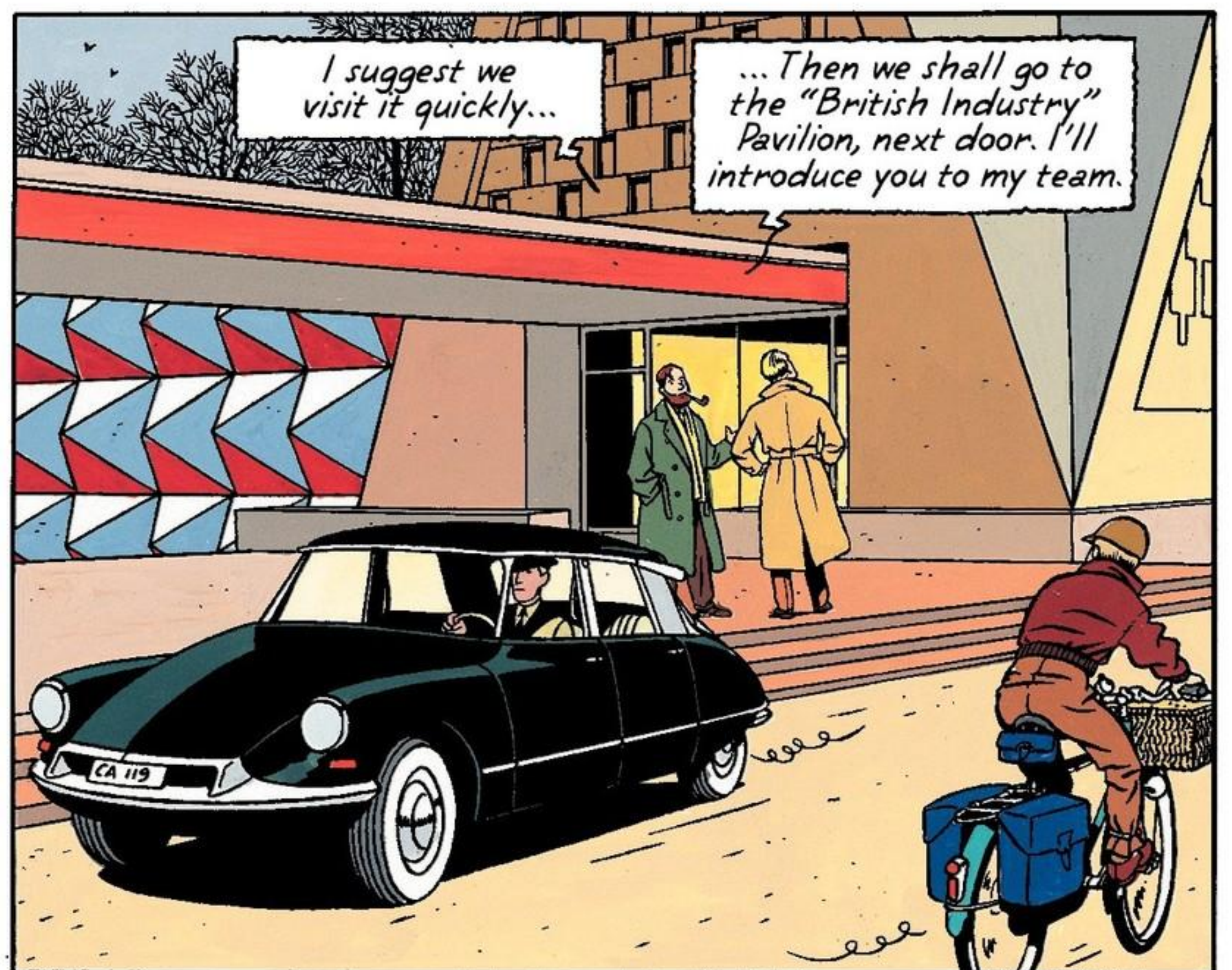
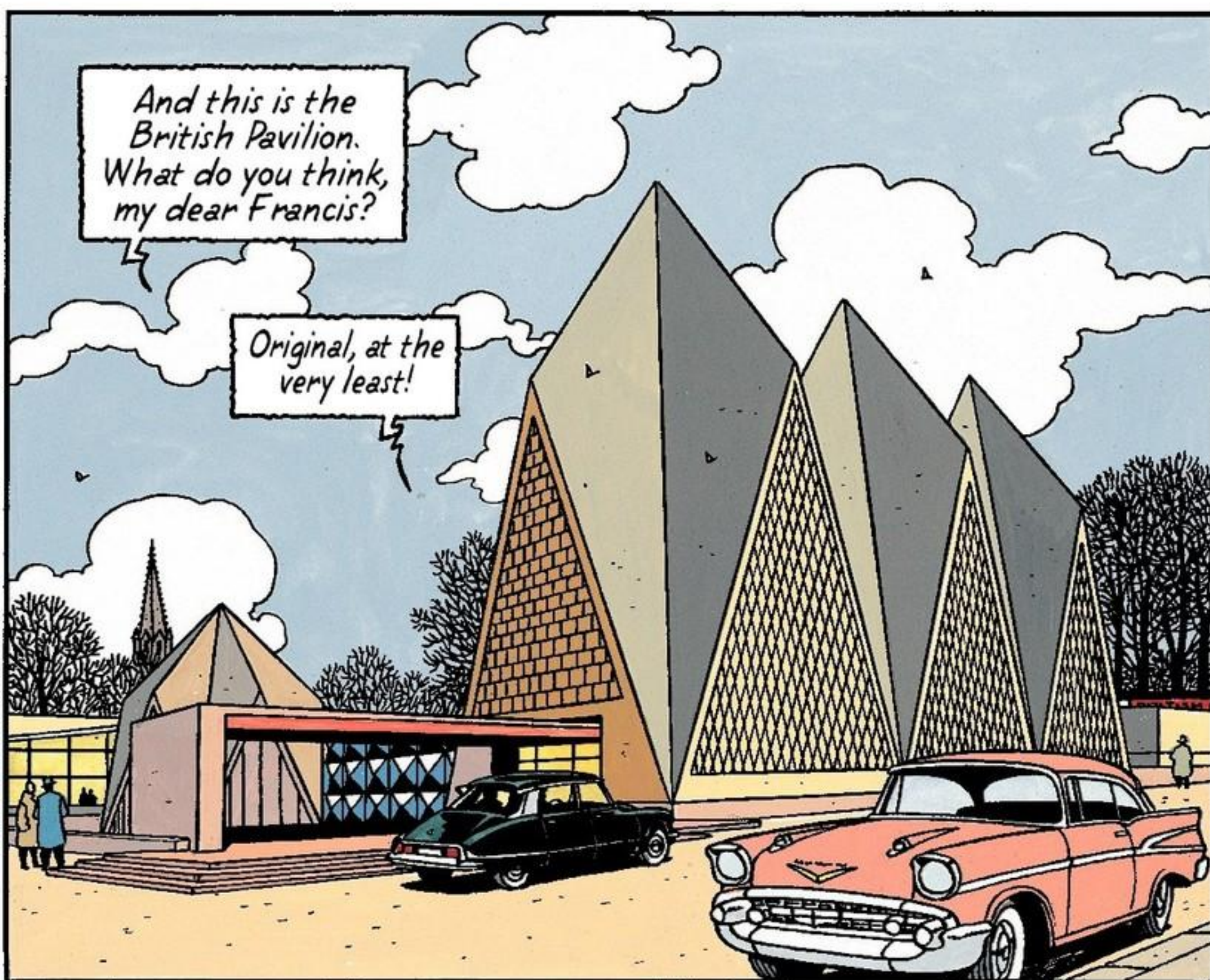
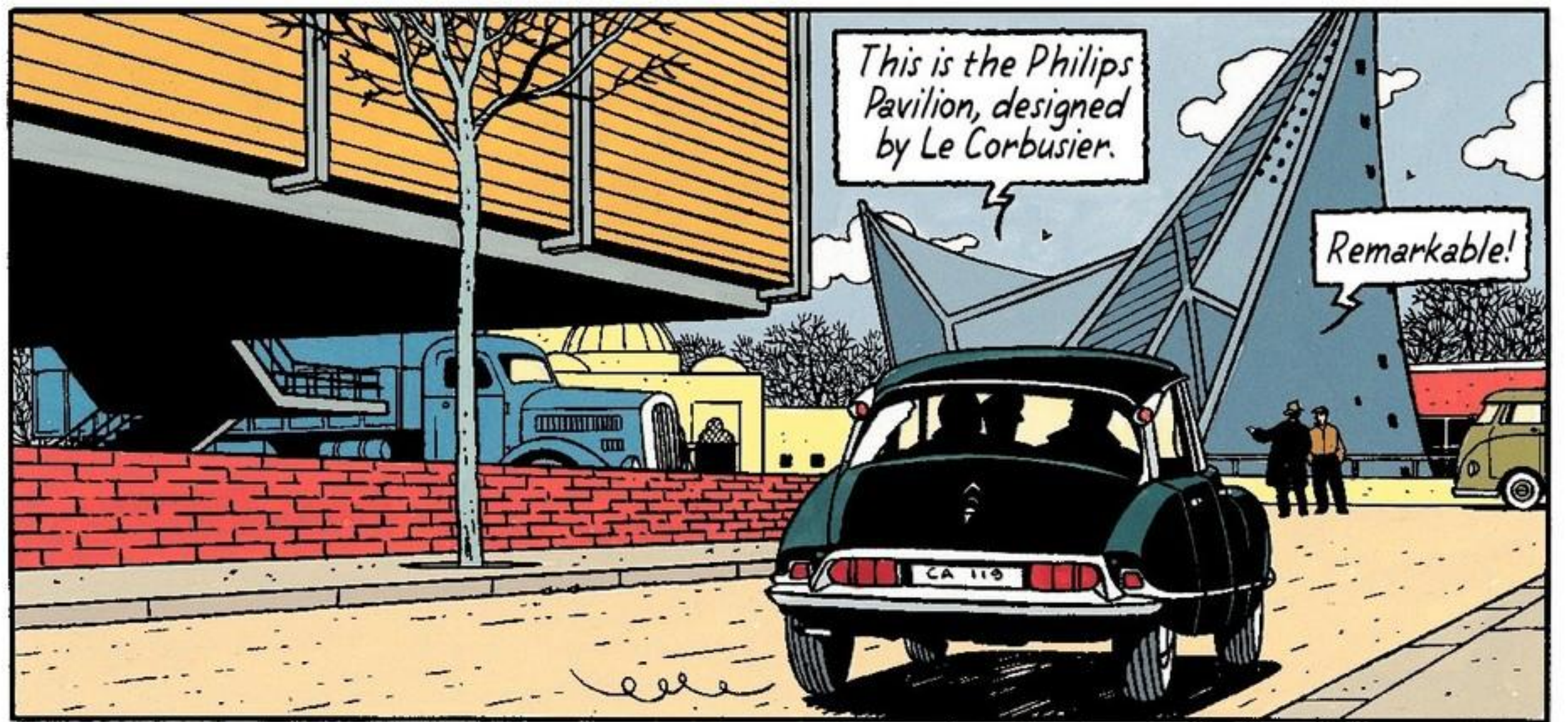
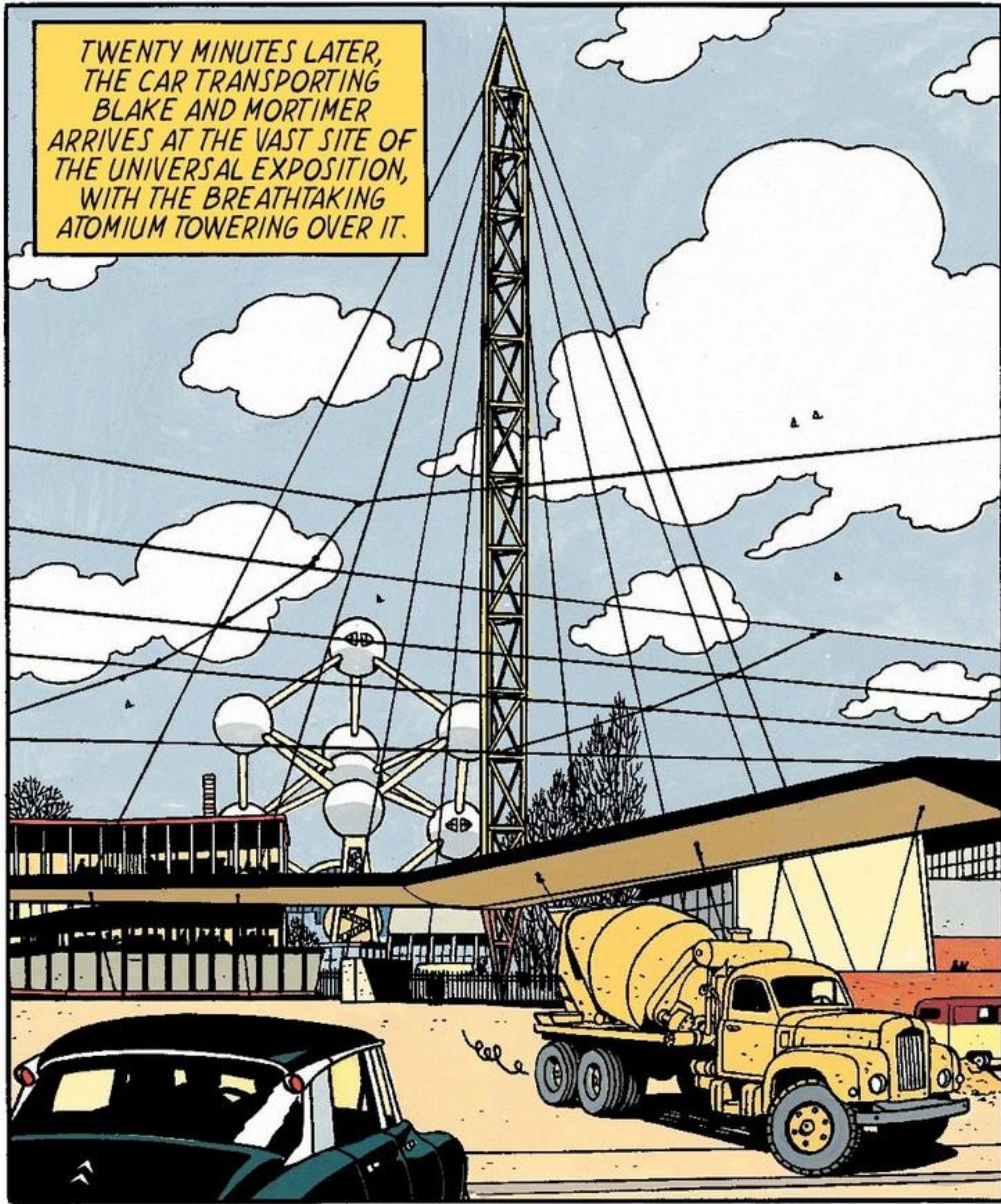


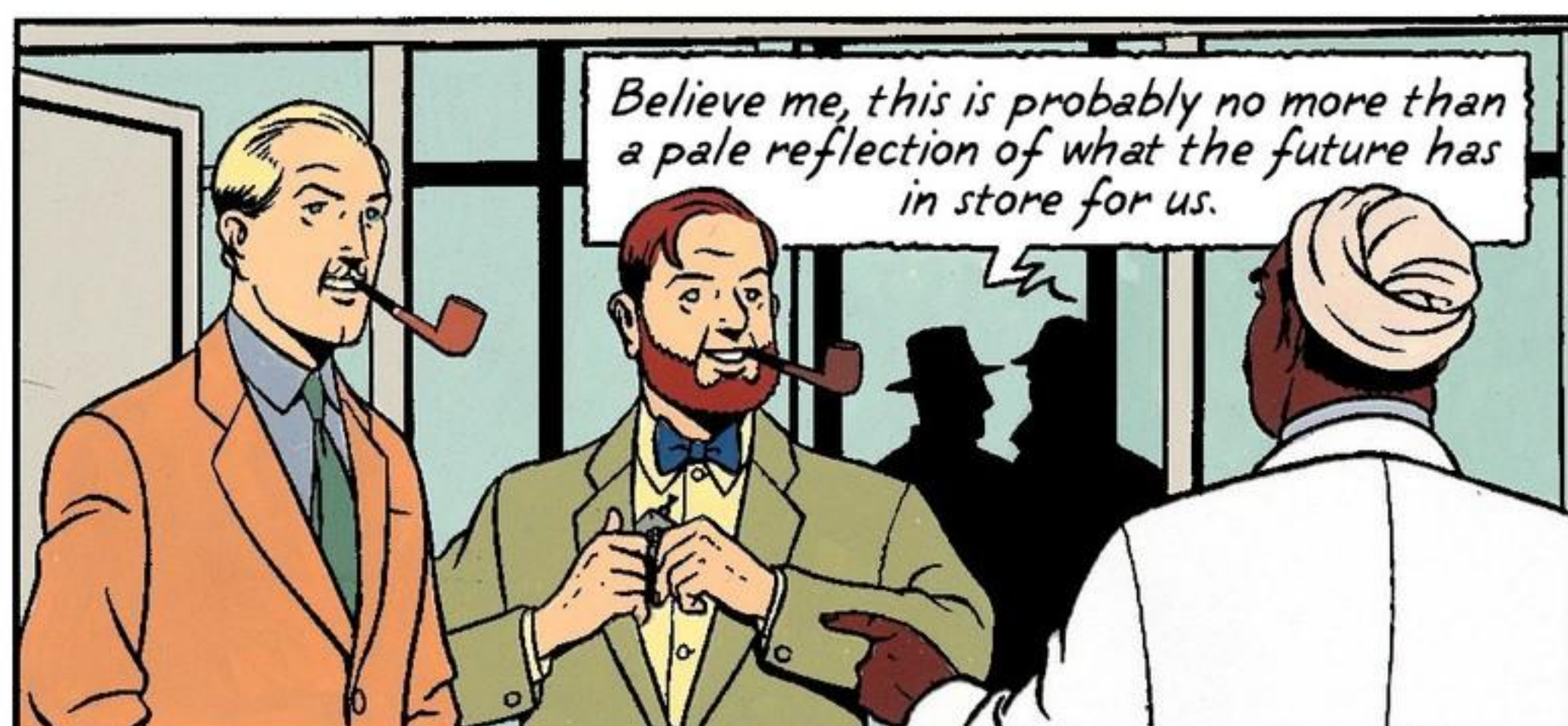
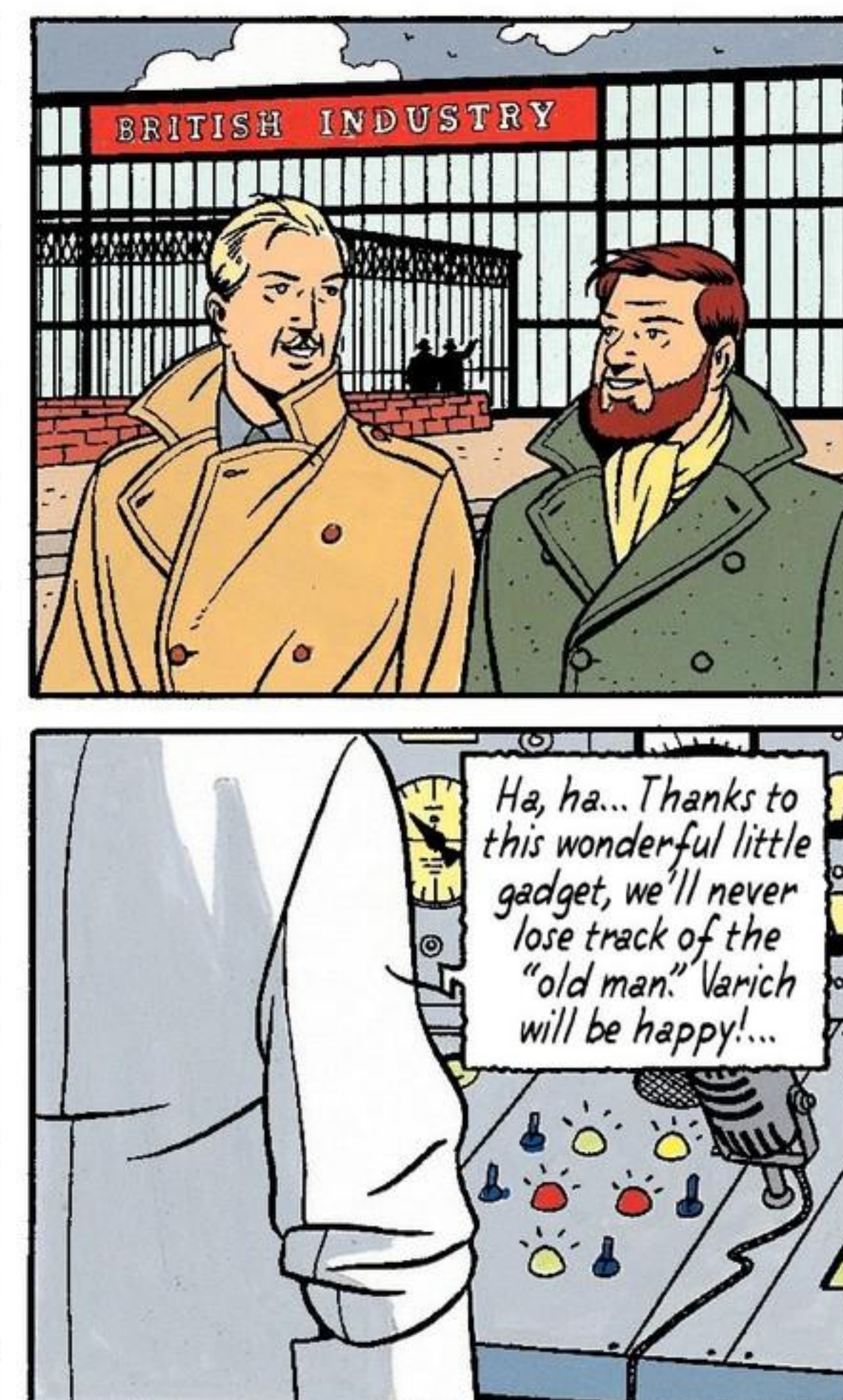
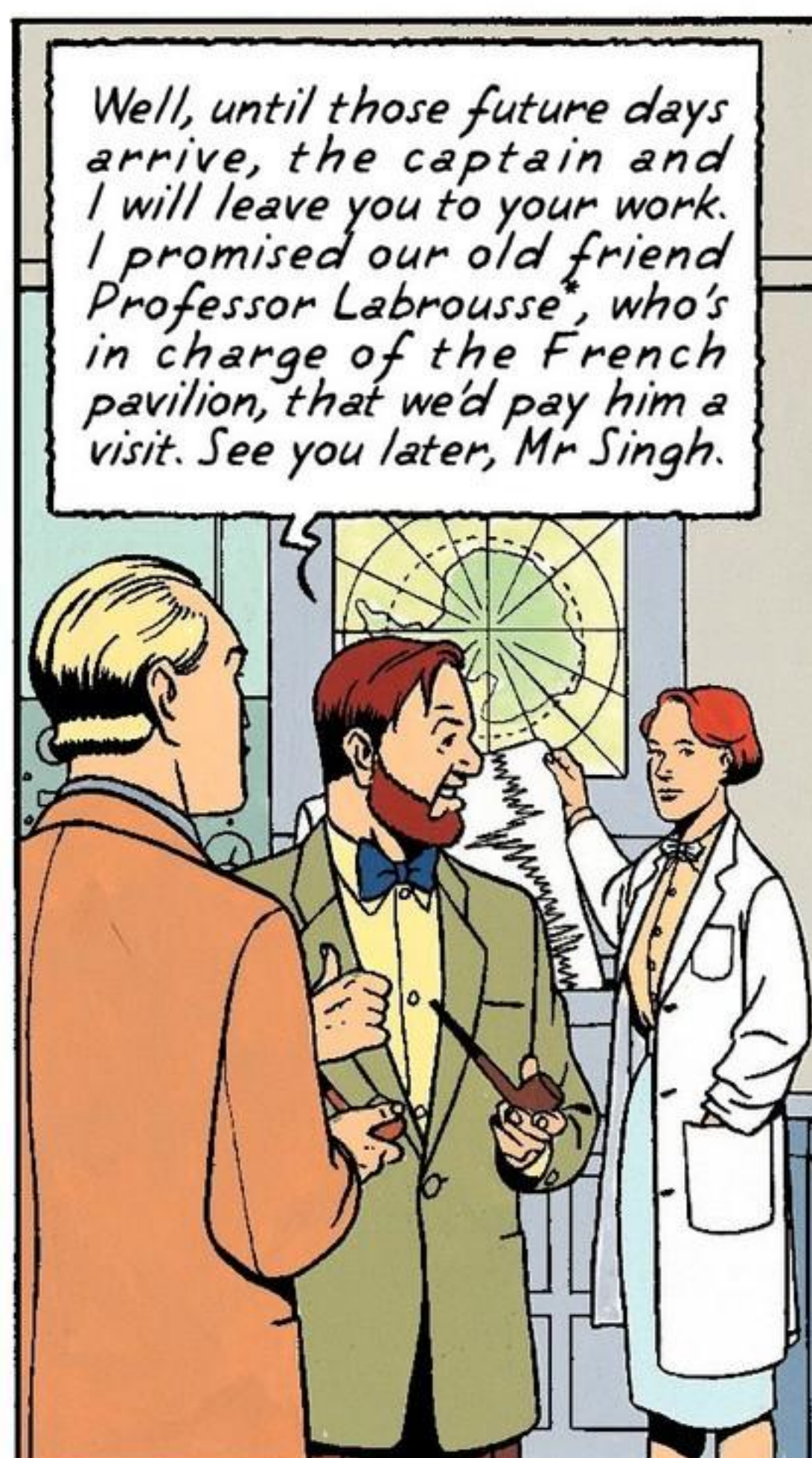
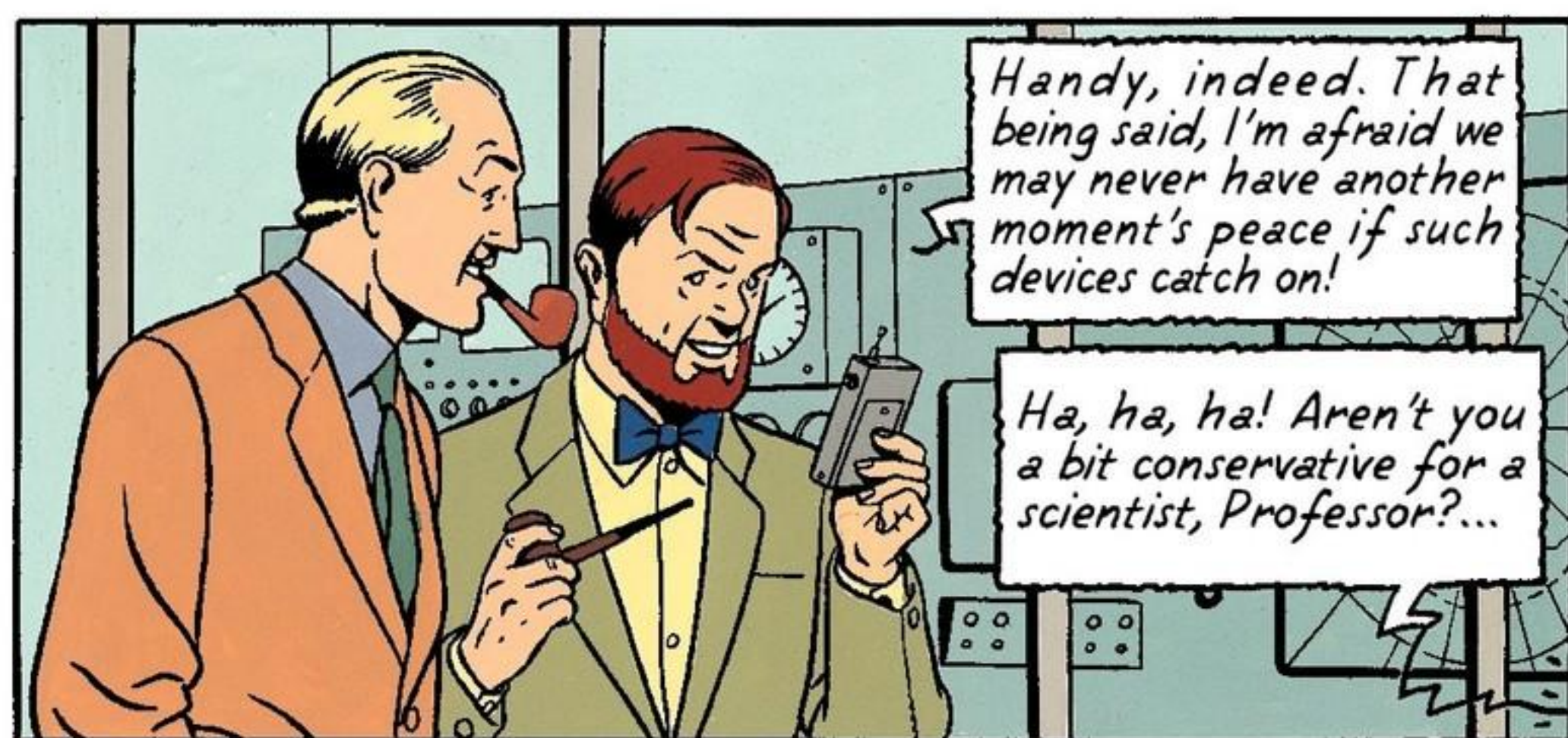
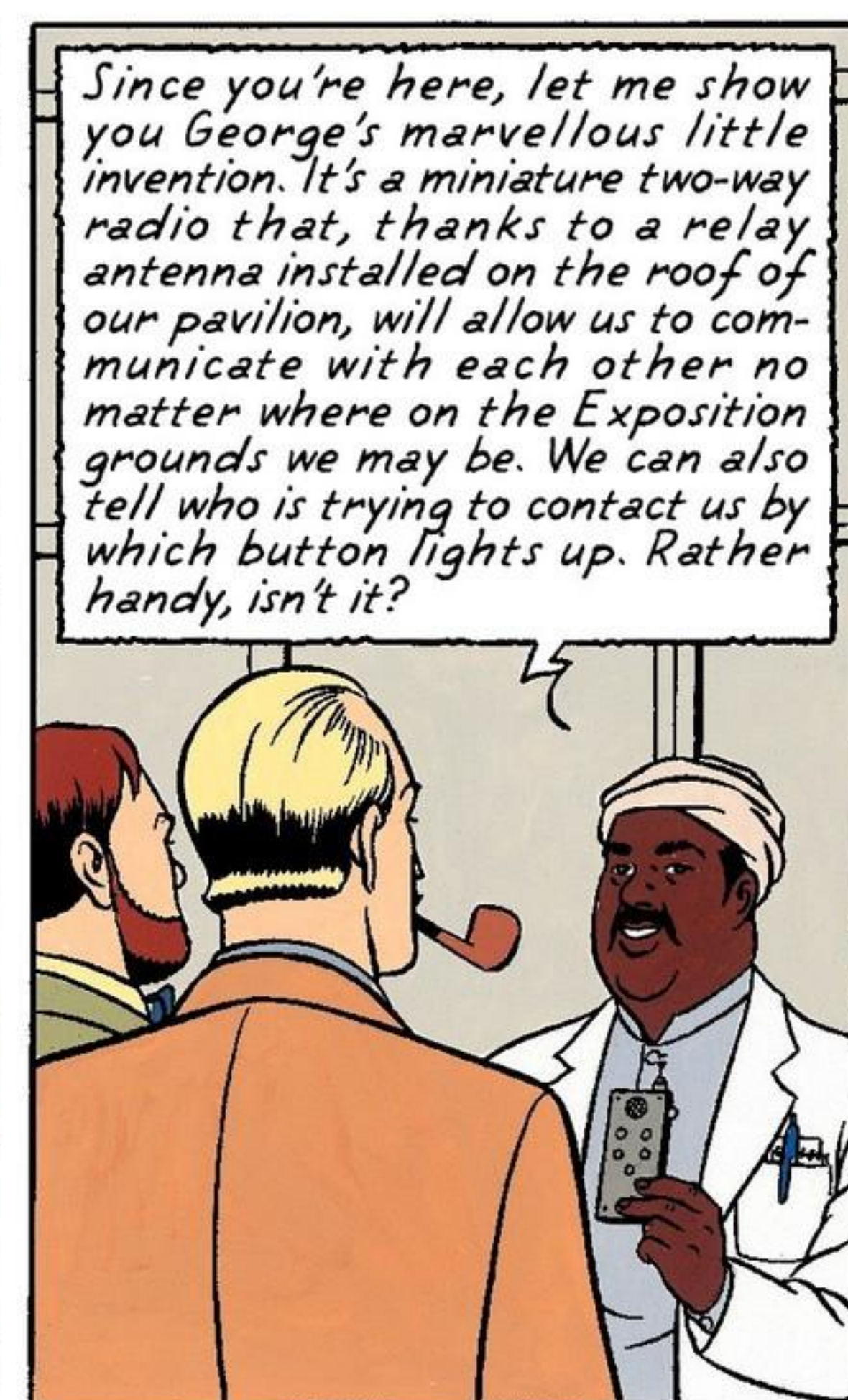
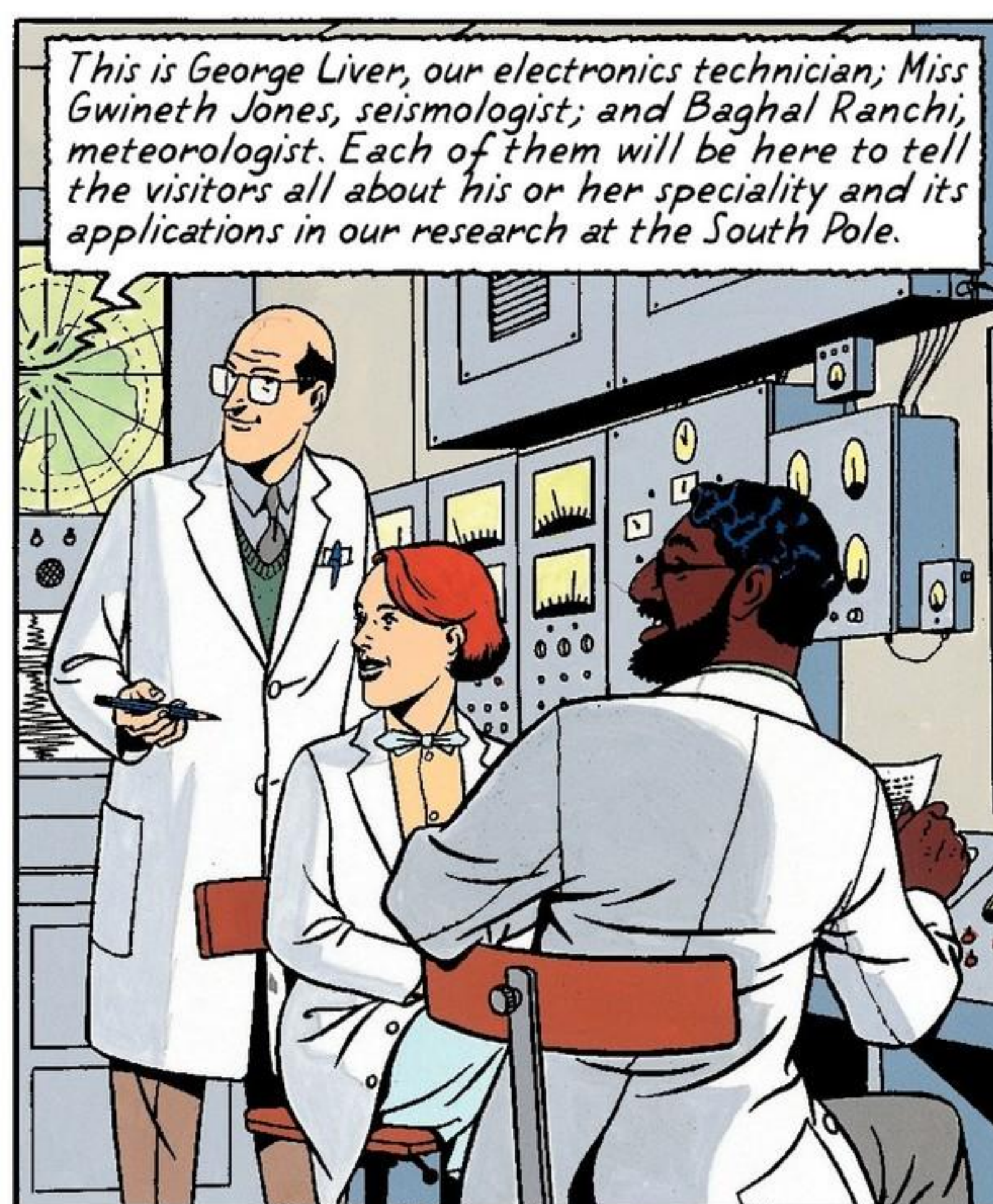
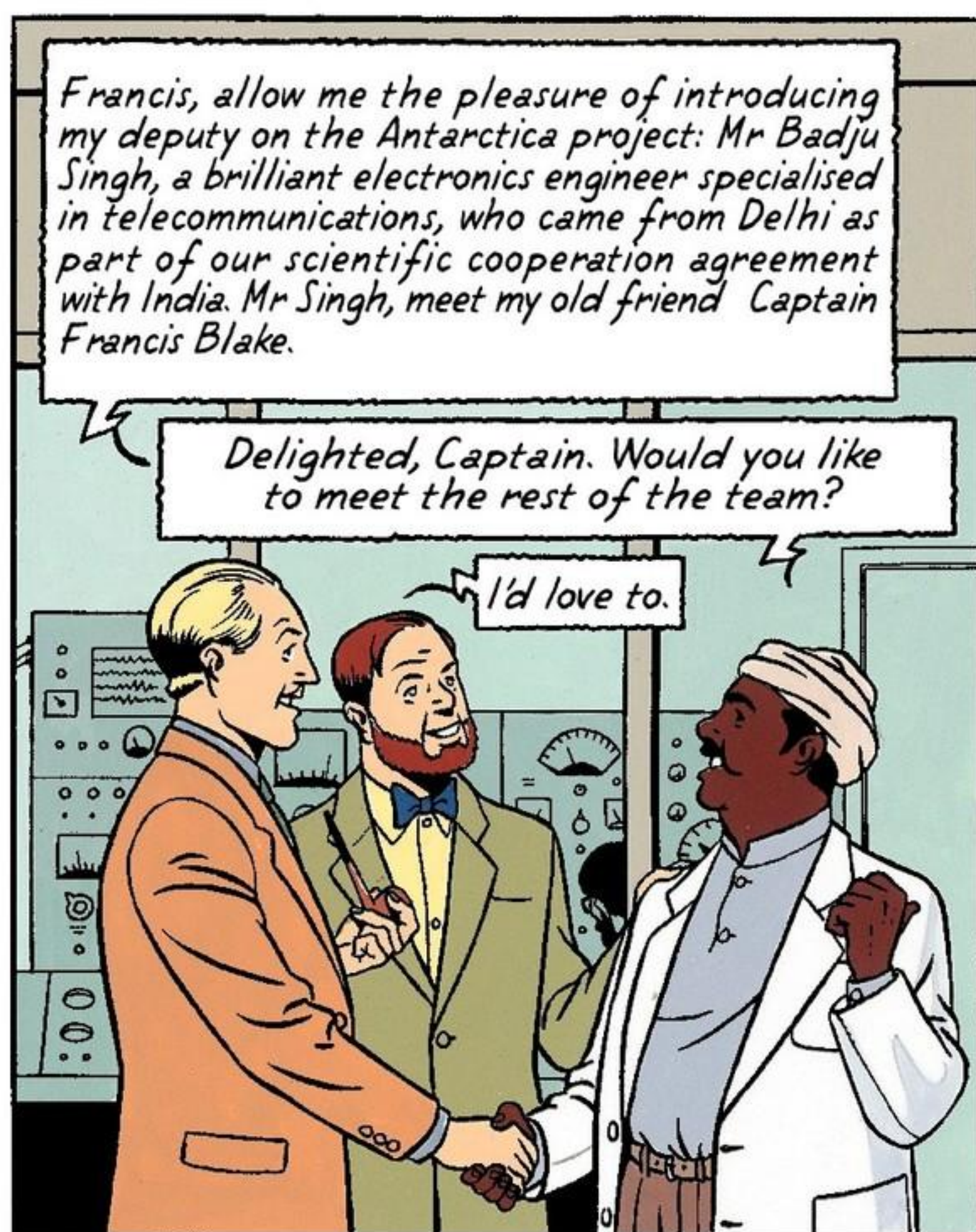
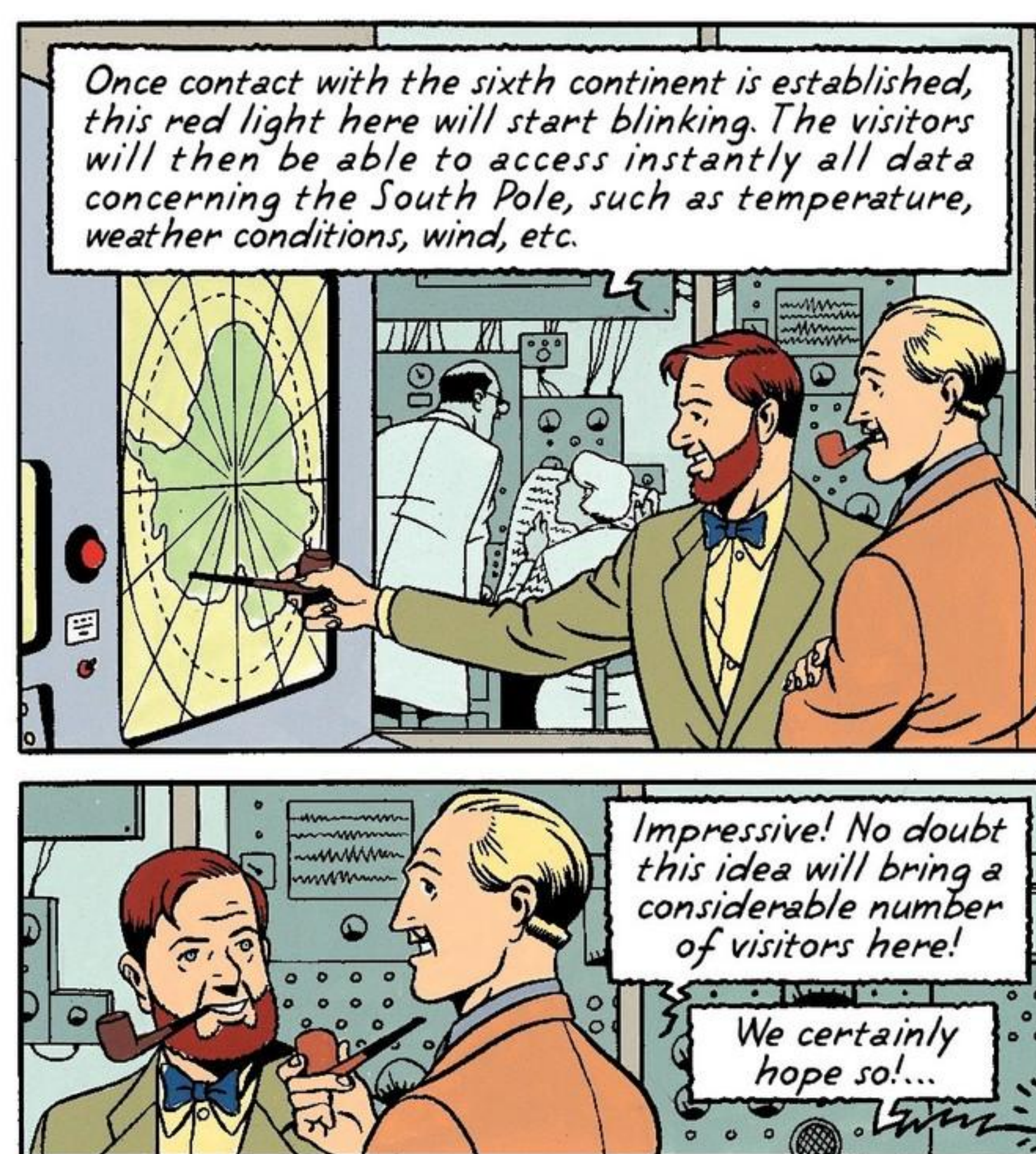
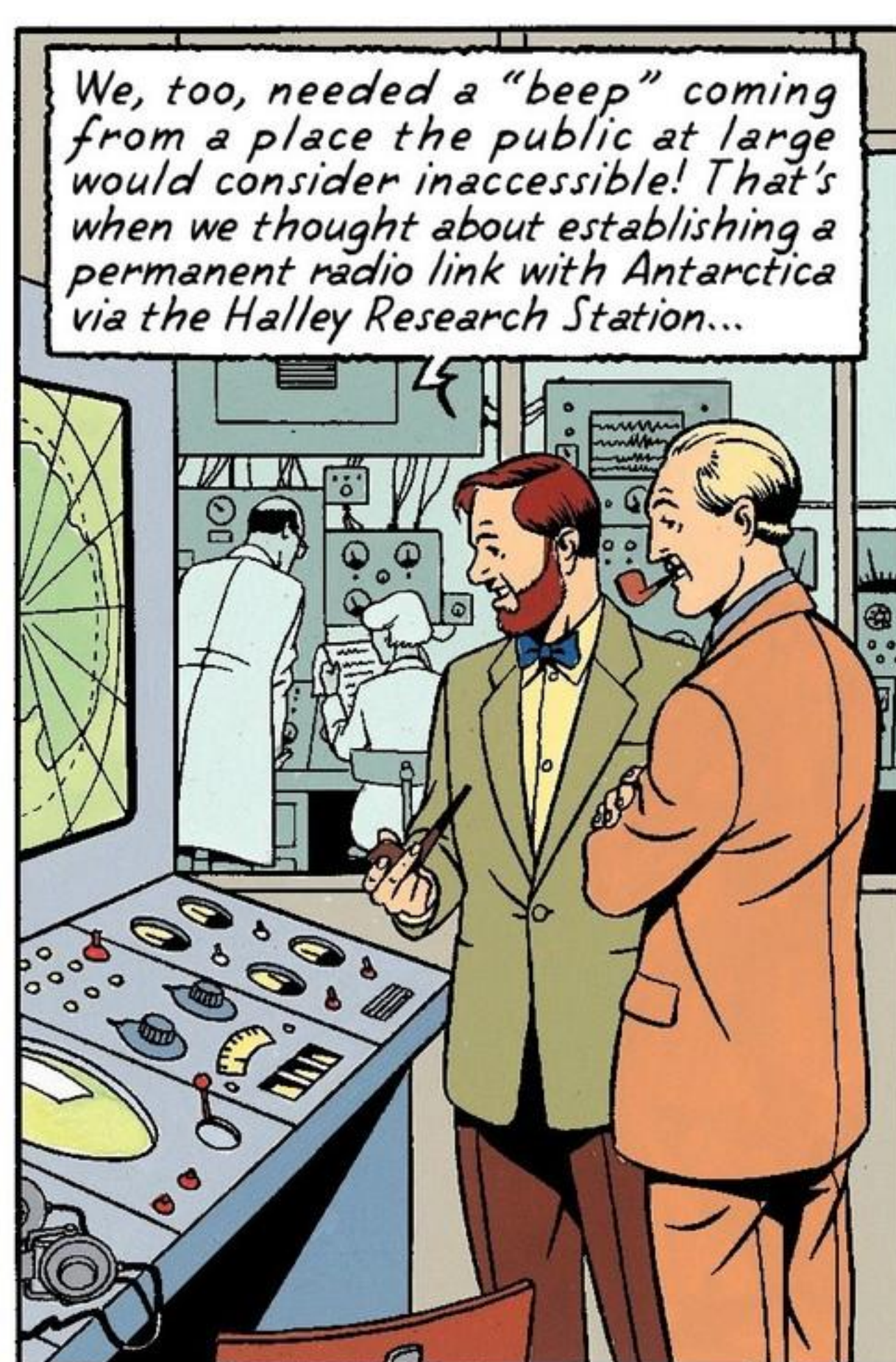
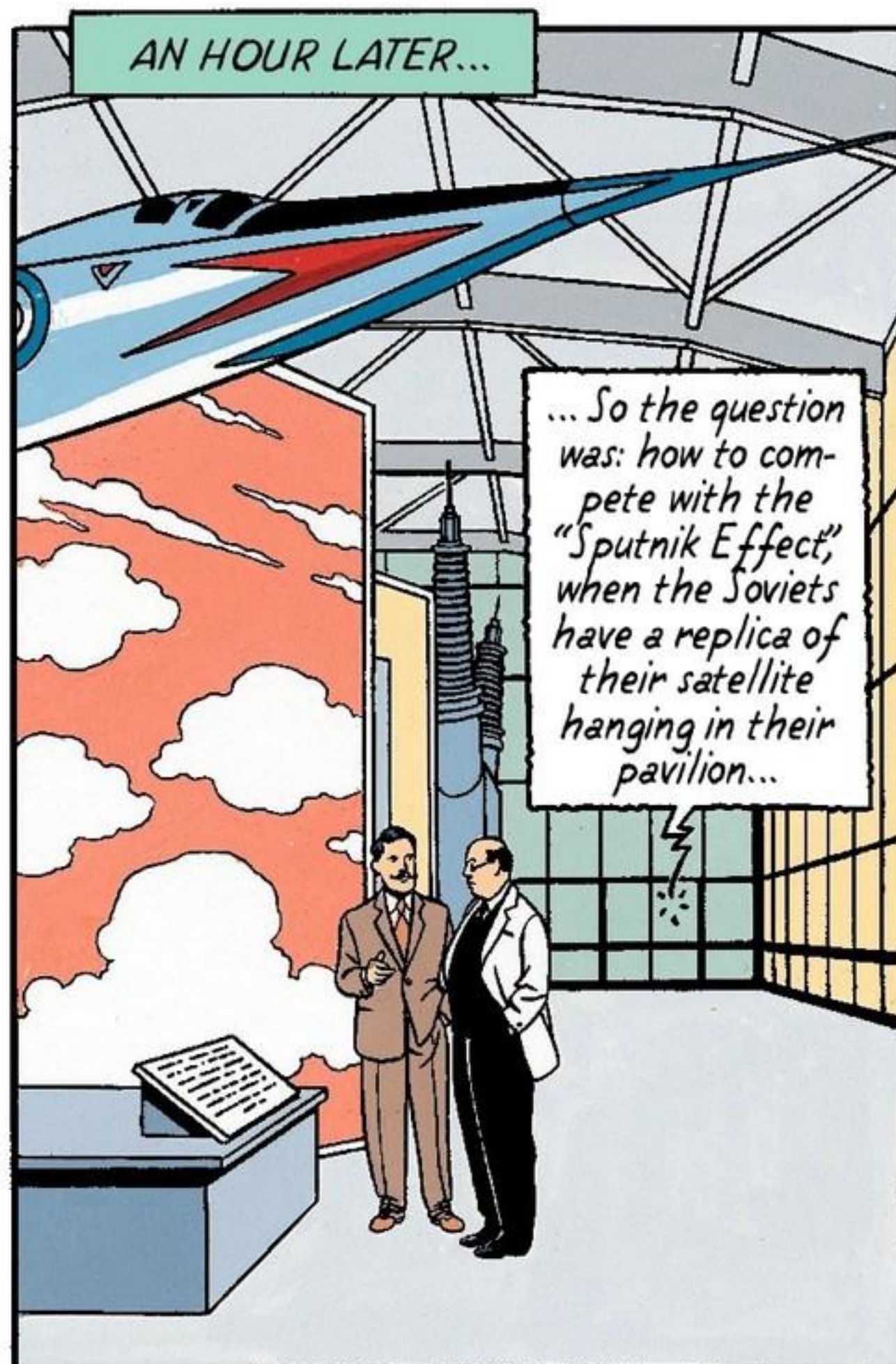
A curse on you, Mortimer! Do you hear me? A CURSE ON YOU!!!

*SEE THE VORONOV PLOT.



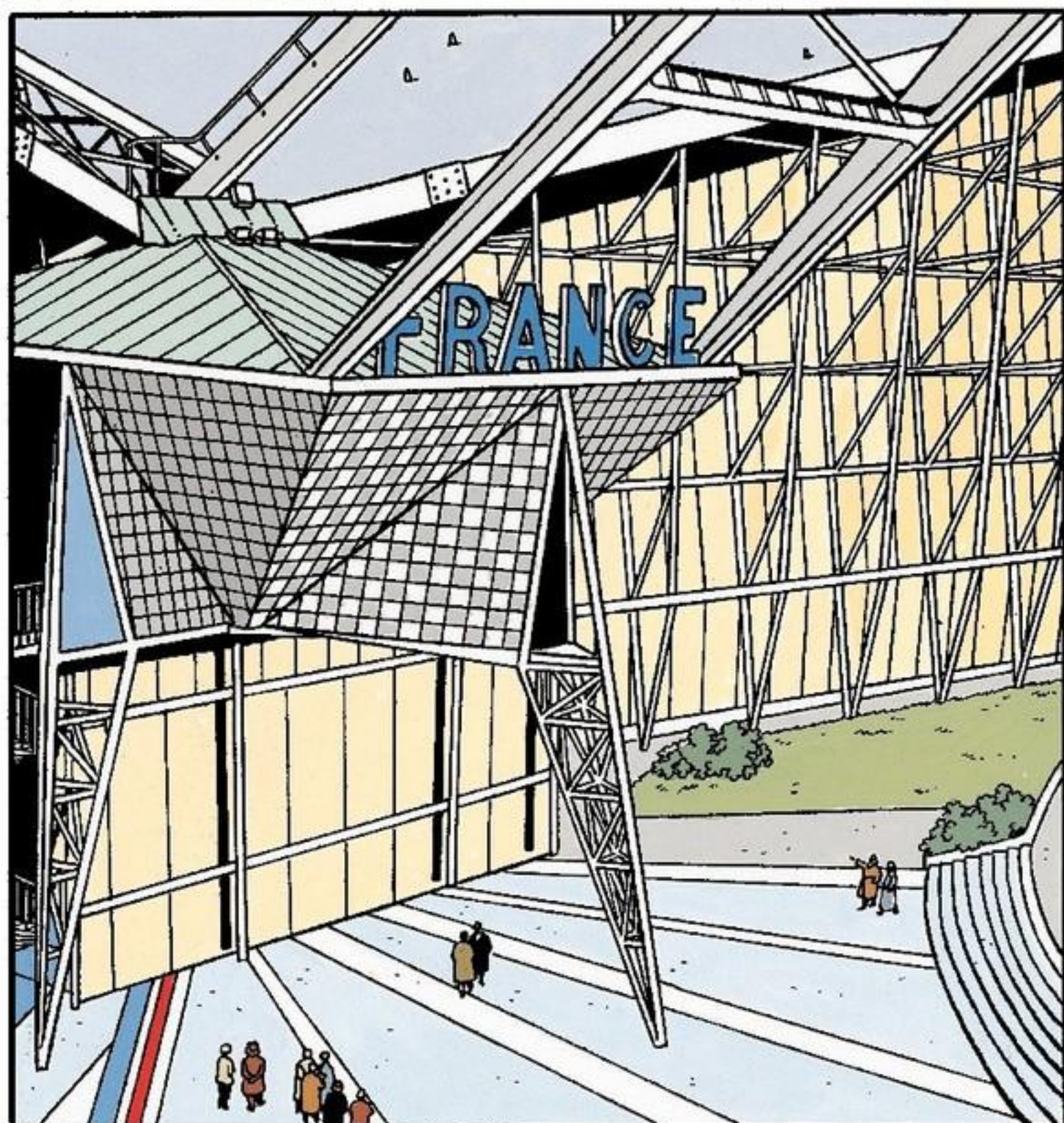
*SEE THE MYSTERY OF THE GREAT PYRAMID.





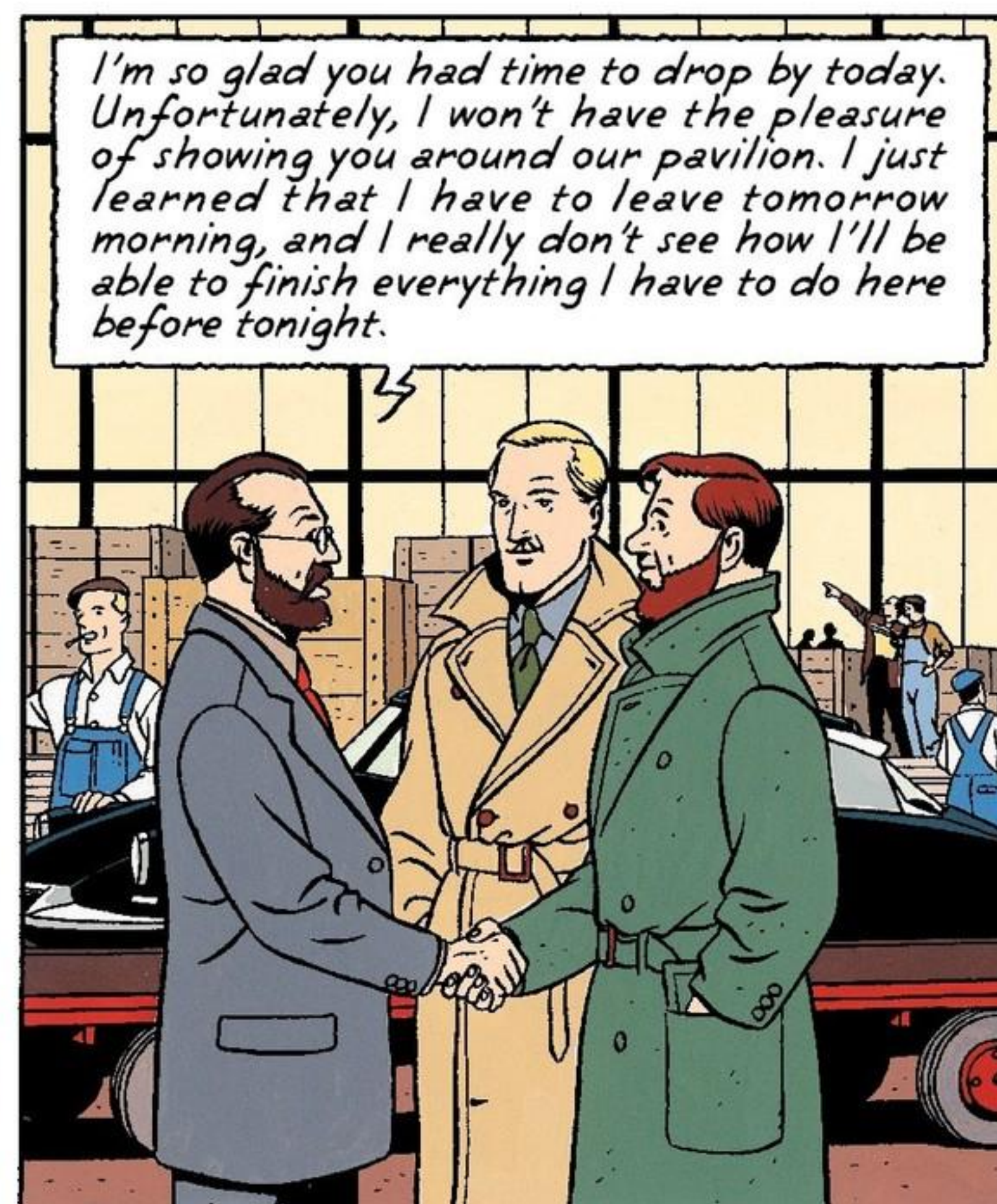
*SEE S.O.S. METEORS.

SHORTLY AFTERWARDS, THE TWO FRIENDS HAVE MADE THEIR WAY TO THE IMPRESSIVE PAVILION BUILT BY FRANCE.

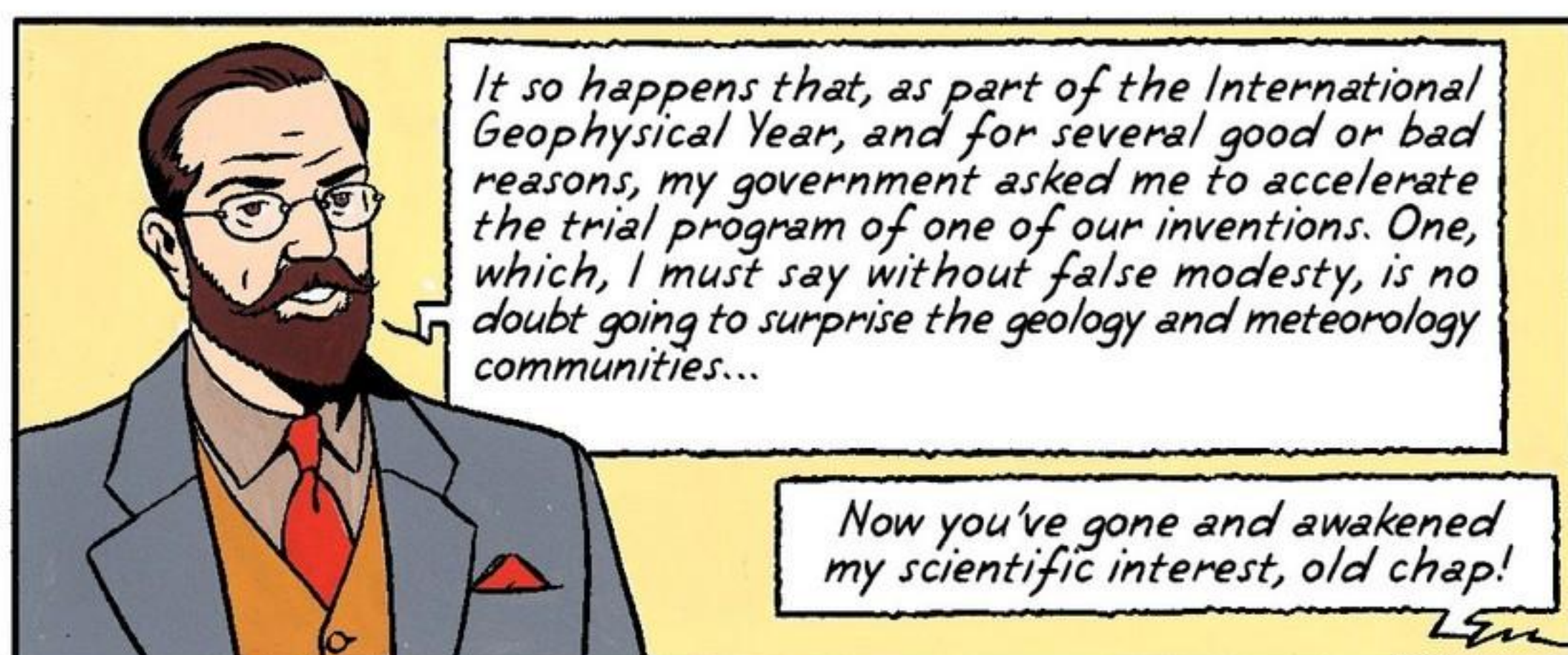


Labrousse!

Mortimer! Blake!
Welcome!



I'm so glad you had time to drop by today. Unfortunately, I won't have the pleasure of showing you around our pavilion. I just learned that I have to leave tomorrow morning, and I really don't see how I'll be able to finish everything I have to do here before tonight.



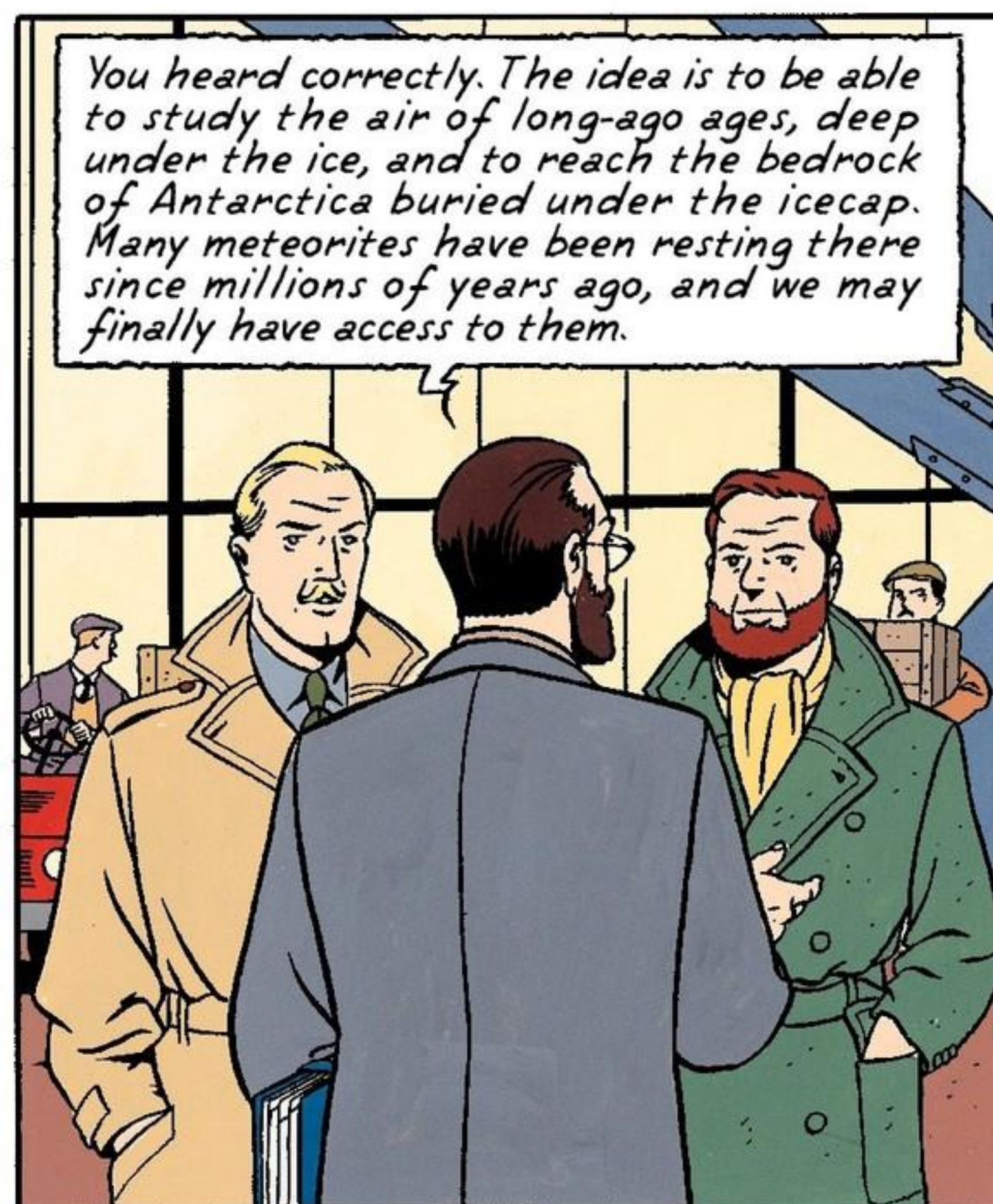
It so happens that, as part of the International Geophysical Year, and for several good or bad reasons, my government asked me to accelerate the trial program of one of our inventions. One, which, I must say without false modesty, is no doubt going to surprise the geology and meteorology communities...

Now you've gone and awakened my scientific interest, old chap!



Knowing you, I expected no less! Without going into details, let's say that with the help of mechanical engineers, I've invented a submarine designed to move through water... and ice!

Through ice?!



You heard correctly. The idea is to be able to study the air of long-ago ages, deep under the ice, and to reach the bedrock of Antarctica buried under the icecap. Many meteorites have been resting there since millions of years ago, and we may finally have access to them.



This is all terribly fascinating, but I don't want to delay you. Just promise me you'll tell me everything after you get back.



Absolutely. That said, I'll be taking the plane to Cape Town, where in three or four days I'll board the cargo ship *La Madeleine*, which will transport the machine to the French base, *Europole*. It's scheduled to stop at the British Halley Station. I'll take the opportunity to give your best to this Captain Byrd you spoke of so highly, and to personally test your radio link with the exposition.

Well, this is a coincidence that demonstrates yet again how the world is getting smaller by the day!

NOT WANTING TO COST PROFESSOR LABROUSSE MORE OF HIS TIME, BLAKE AND MORTIMER WISH THEIR FRIEND A SAFE JOURNEY AND LEAVE THE FRENCH PAVILION.



Poor Labrousse. The coming days might be quite exhausting for him!



SUDDENLY, A COURIER ZOOMS PAST THE TWO FRIENDS ON HIS BIKE, NARROWLY AVOIDING A COLLISION...

... AND SPEEDS OFF WITHOUT A WORD.



Good grief! How rude of him! He came very close to knocking us down, the rascal!

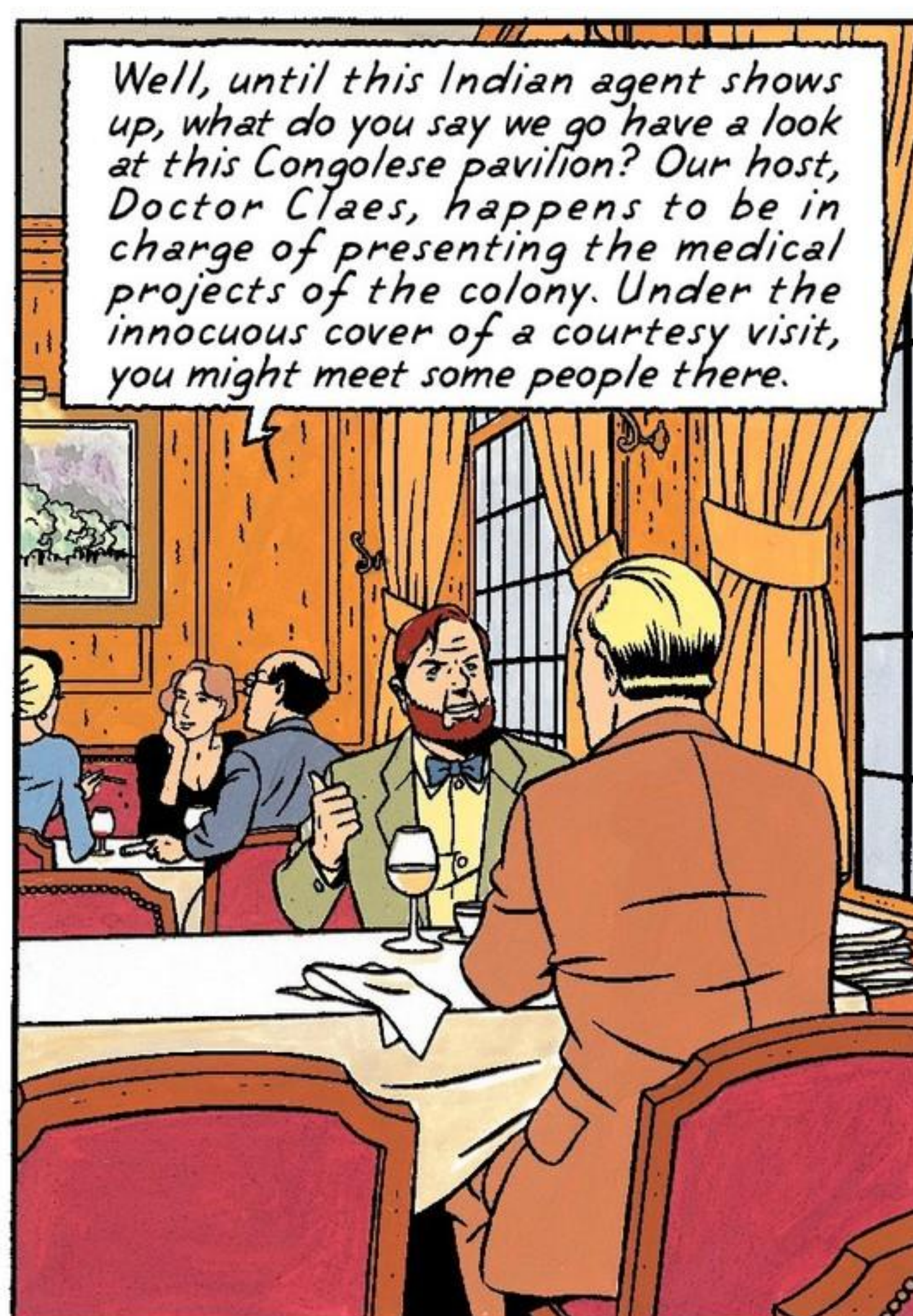
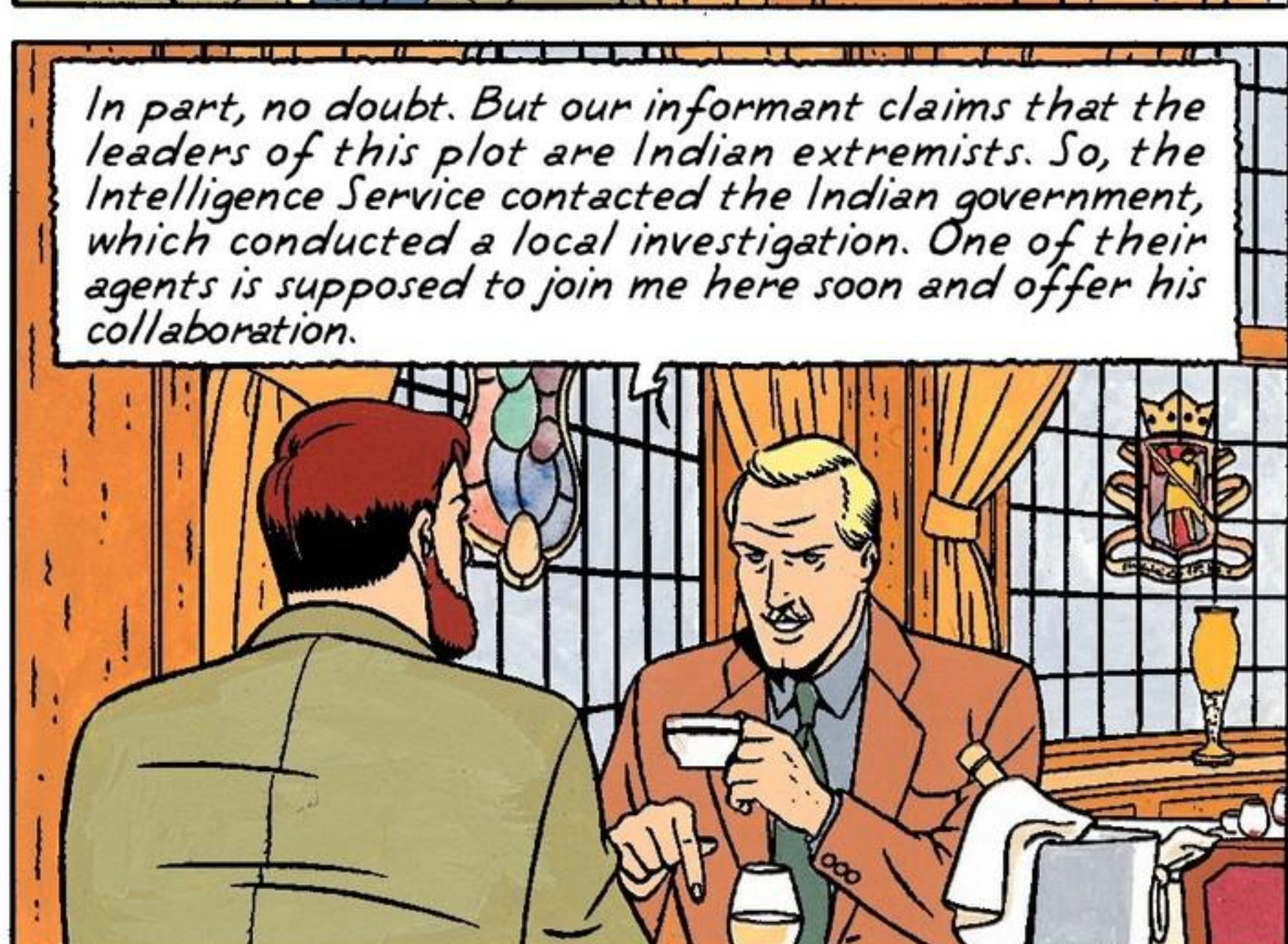
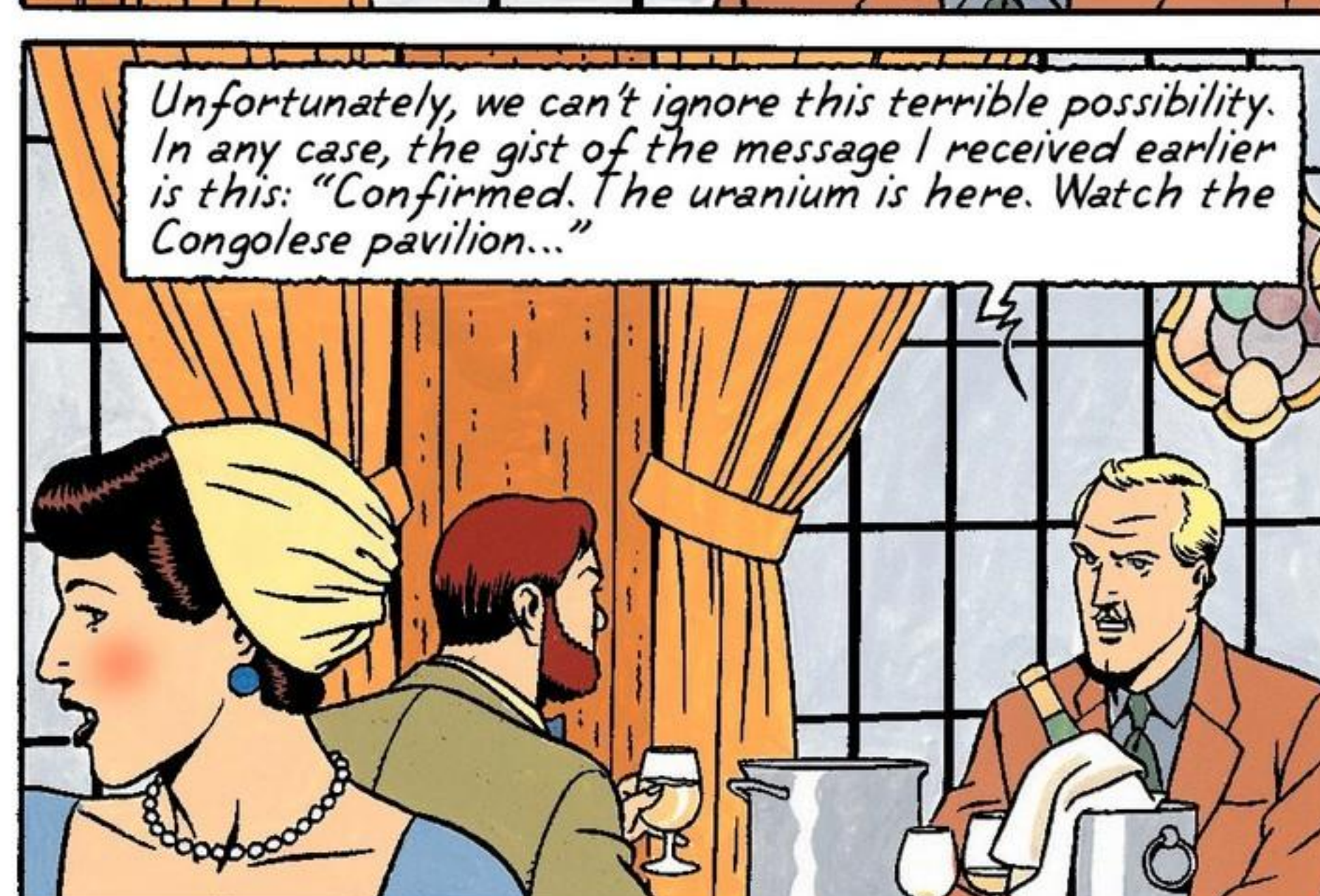
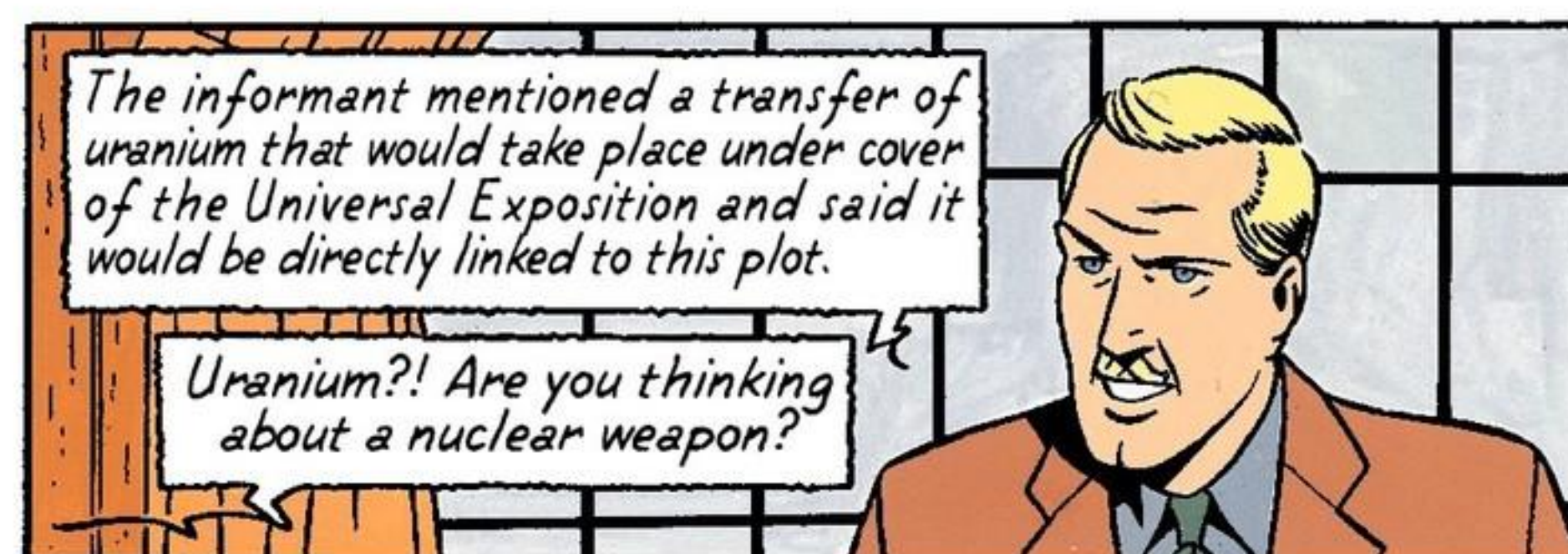
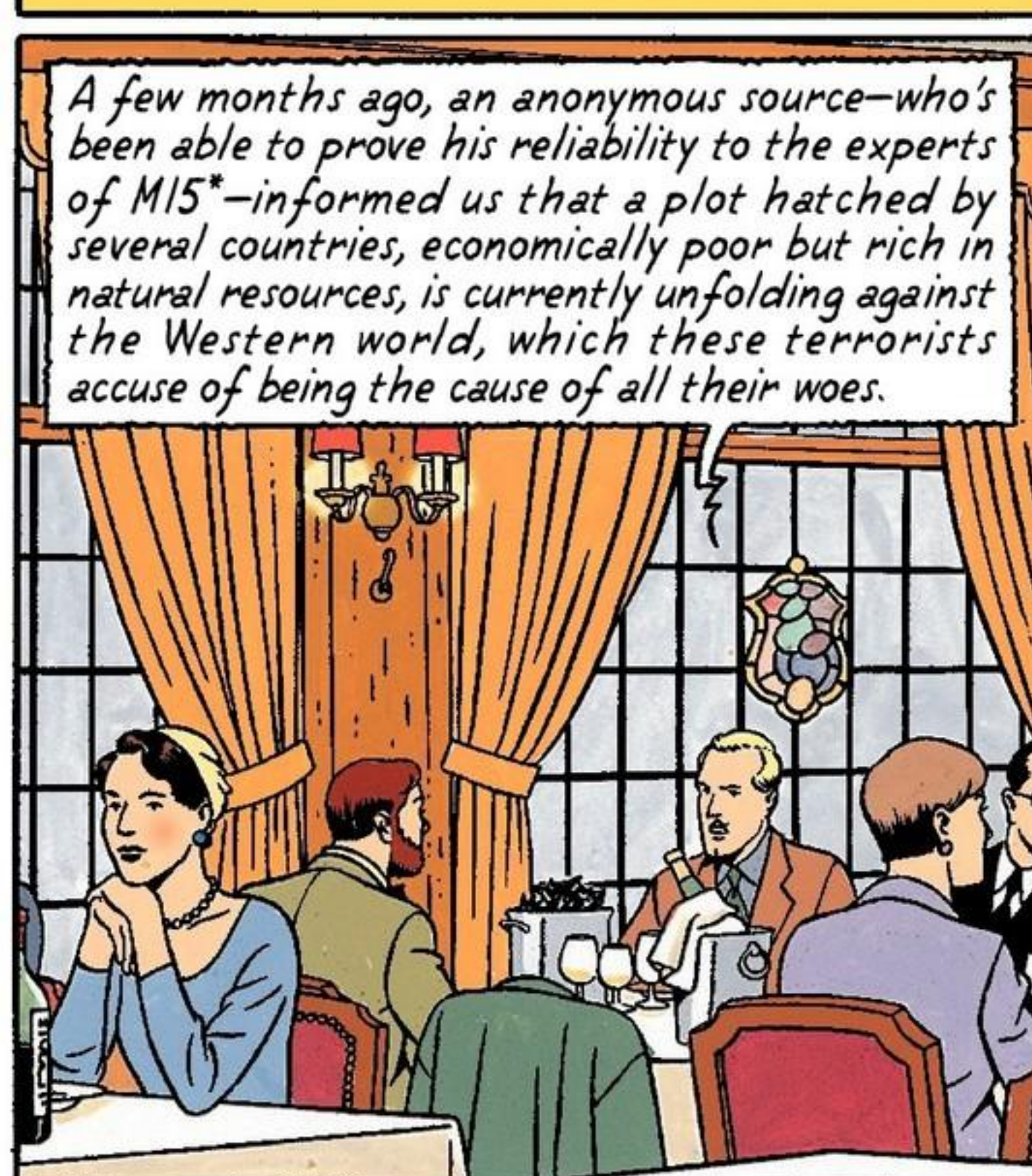


Are you all right, Francis?

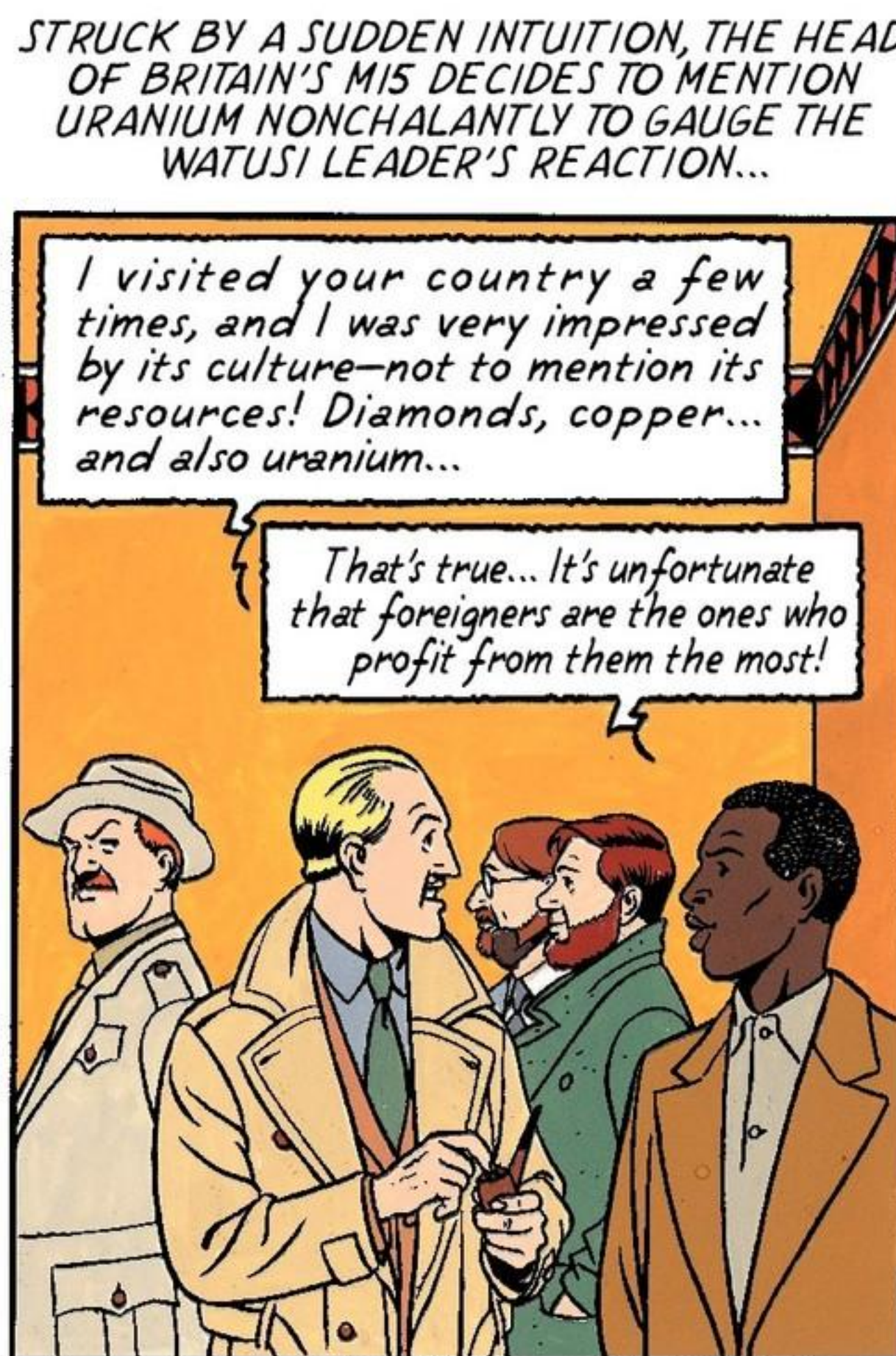
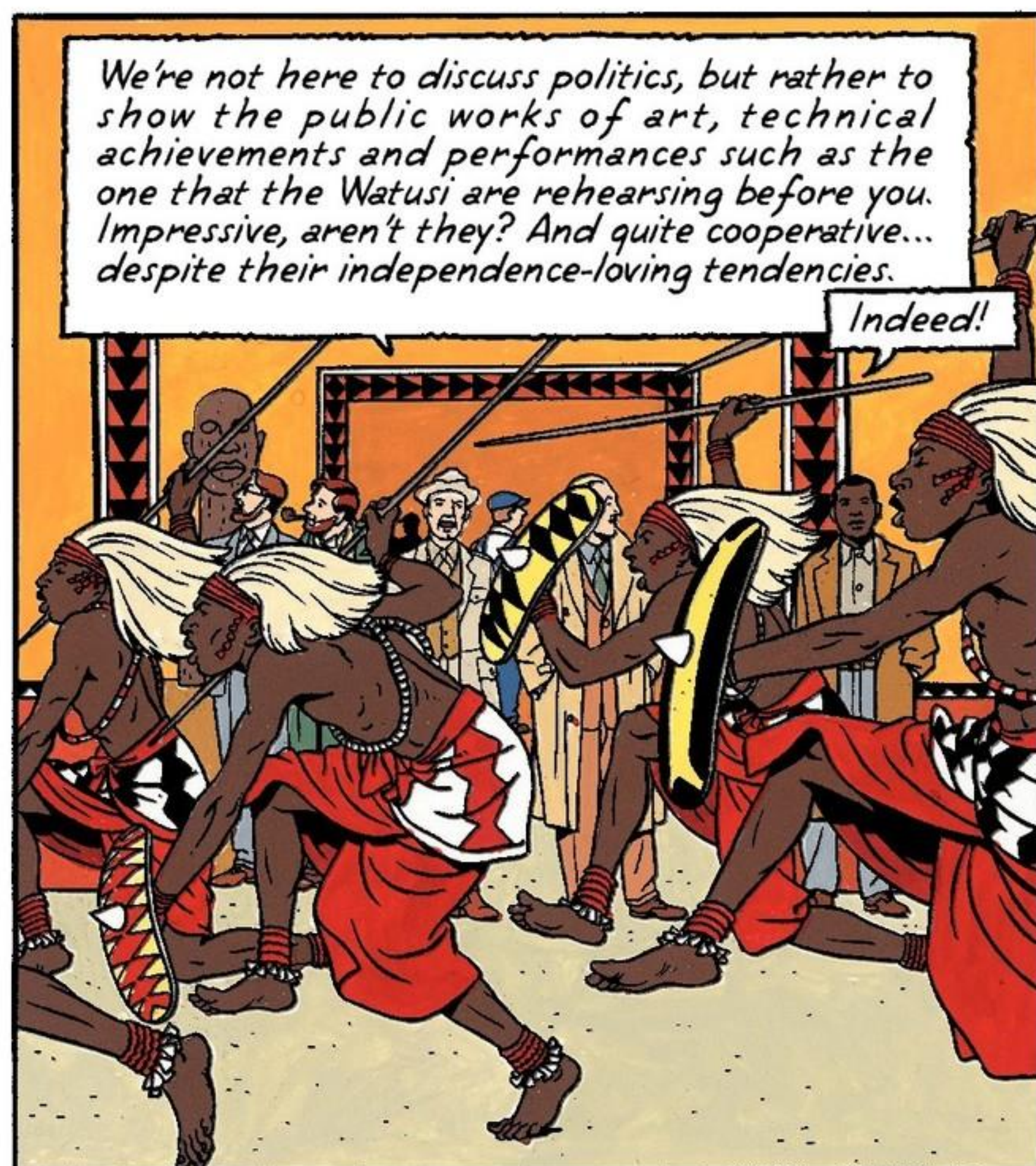
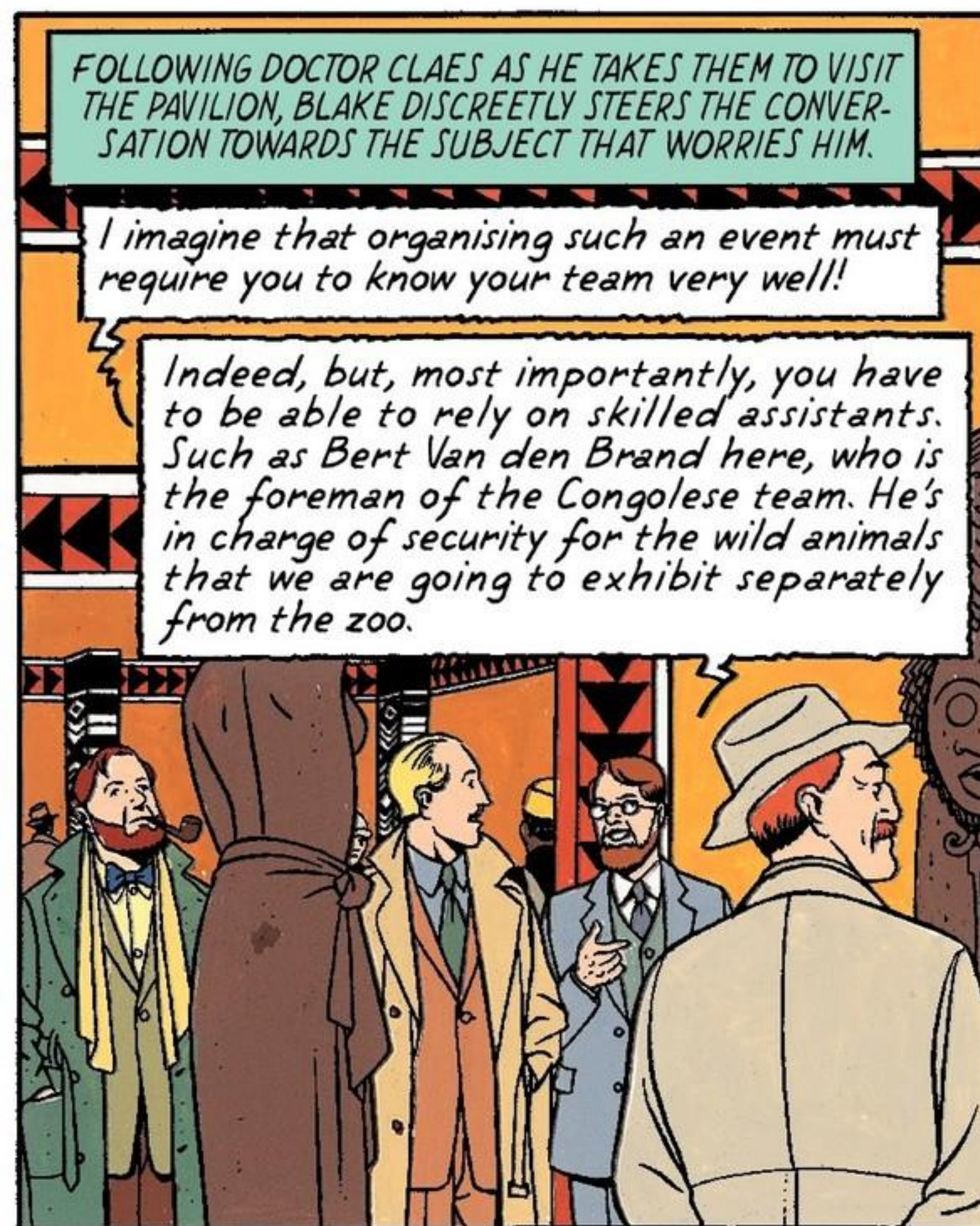
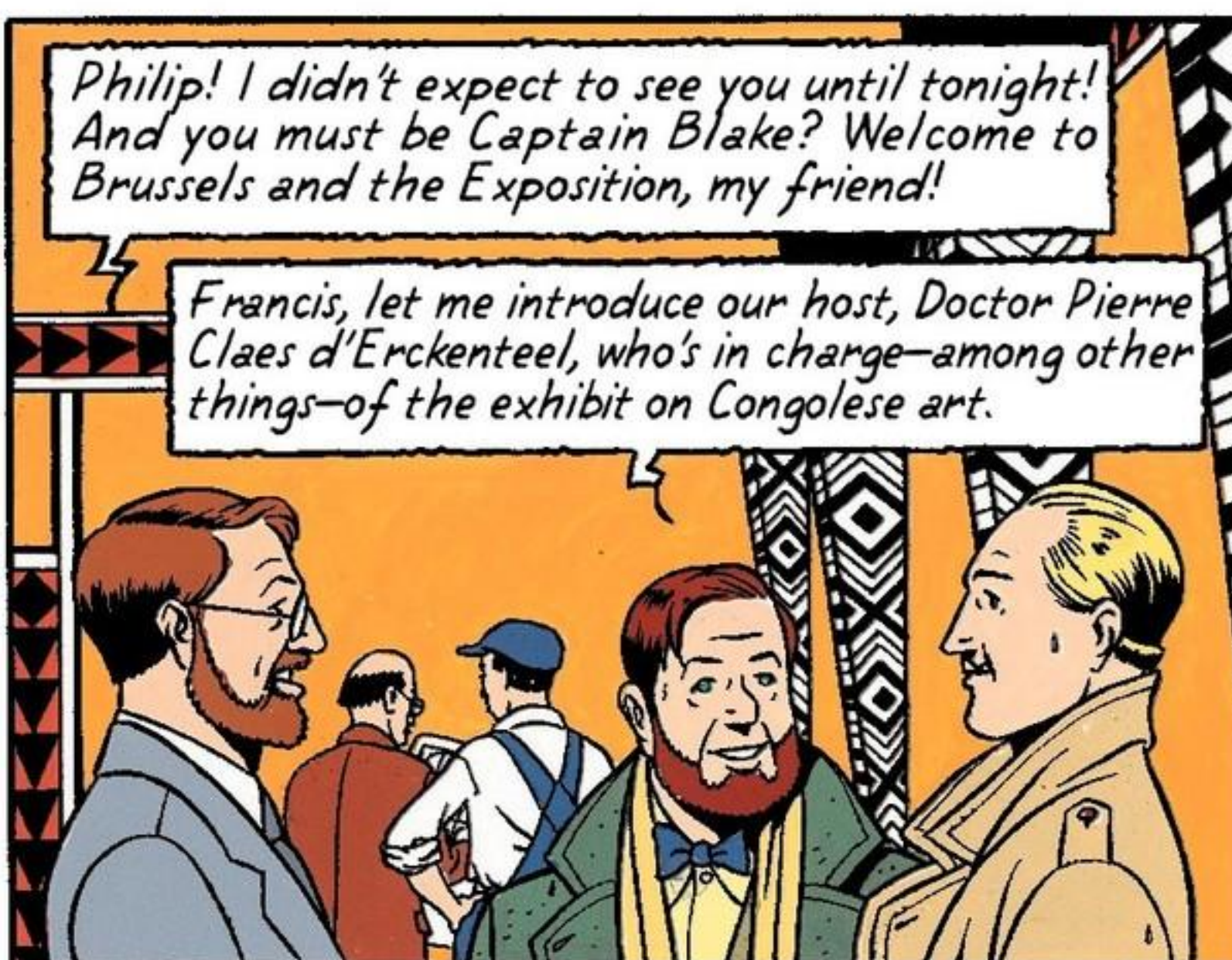
I've got... a letter!

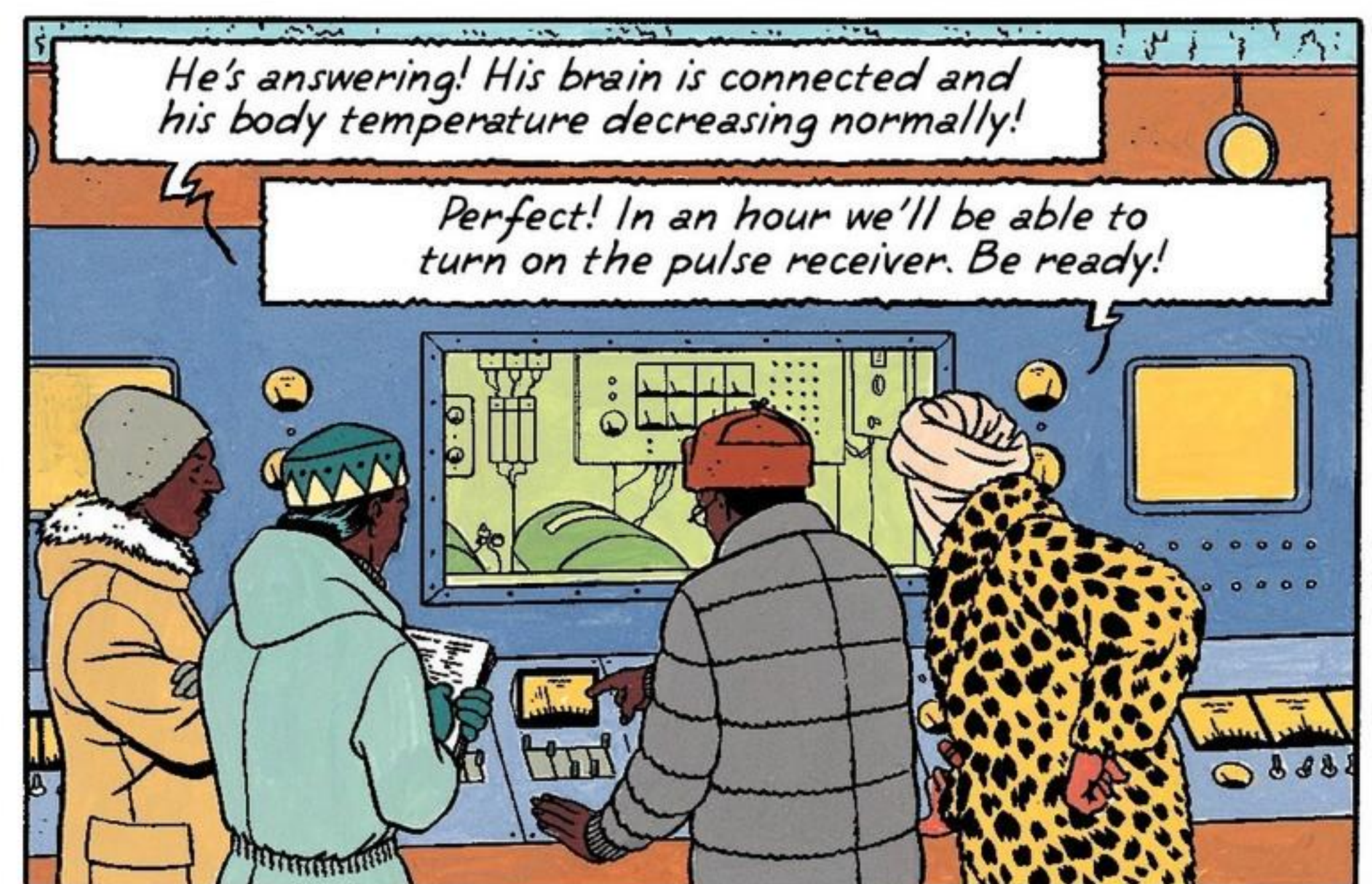
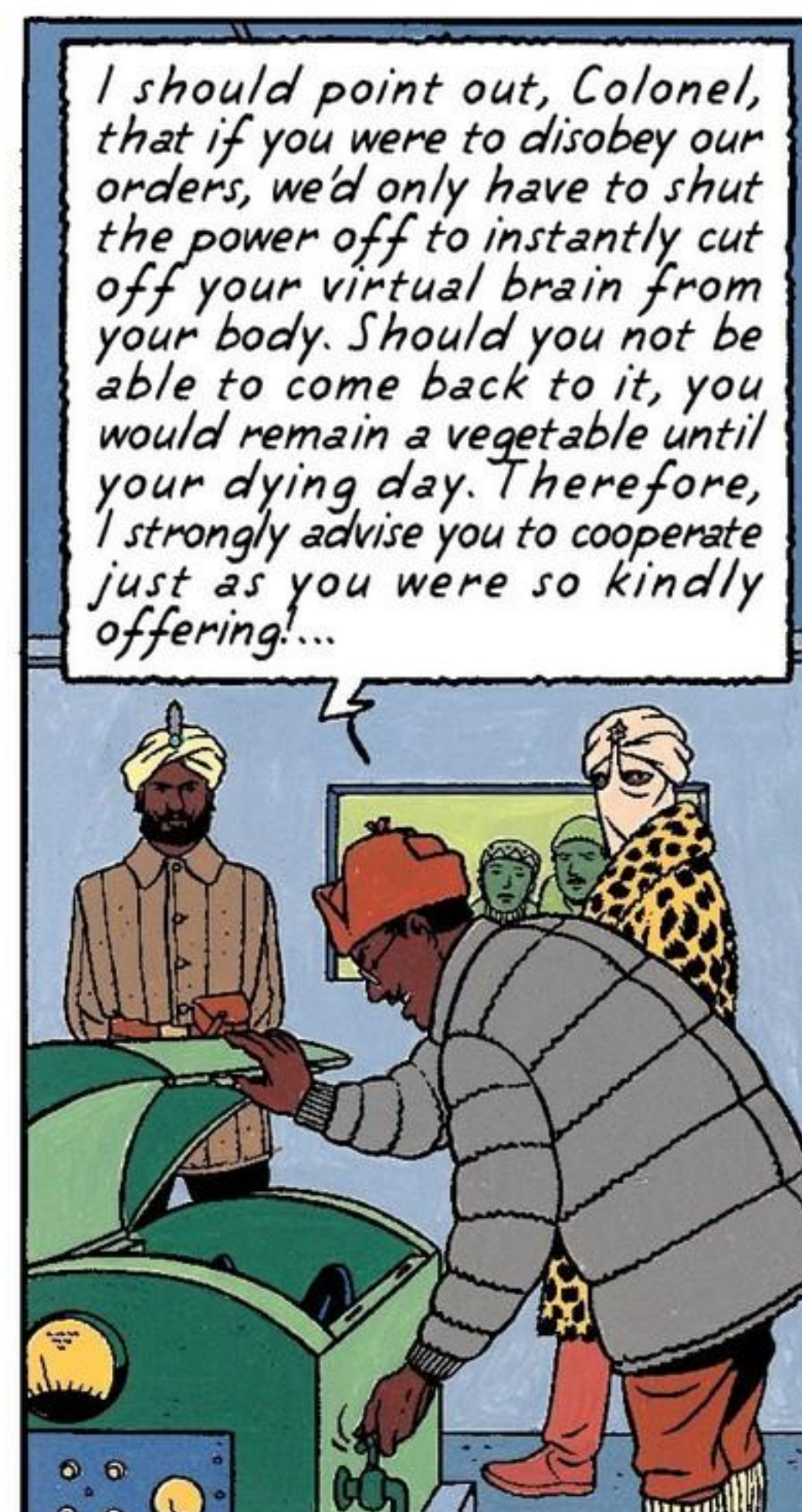
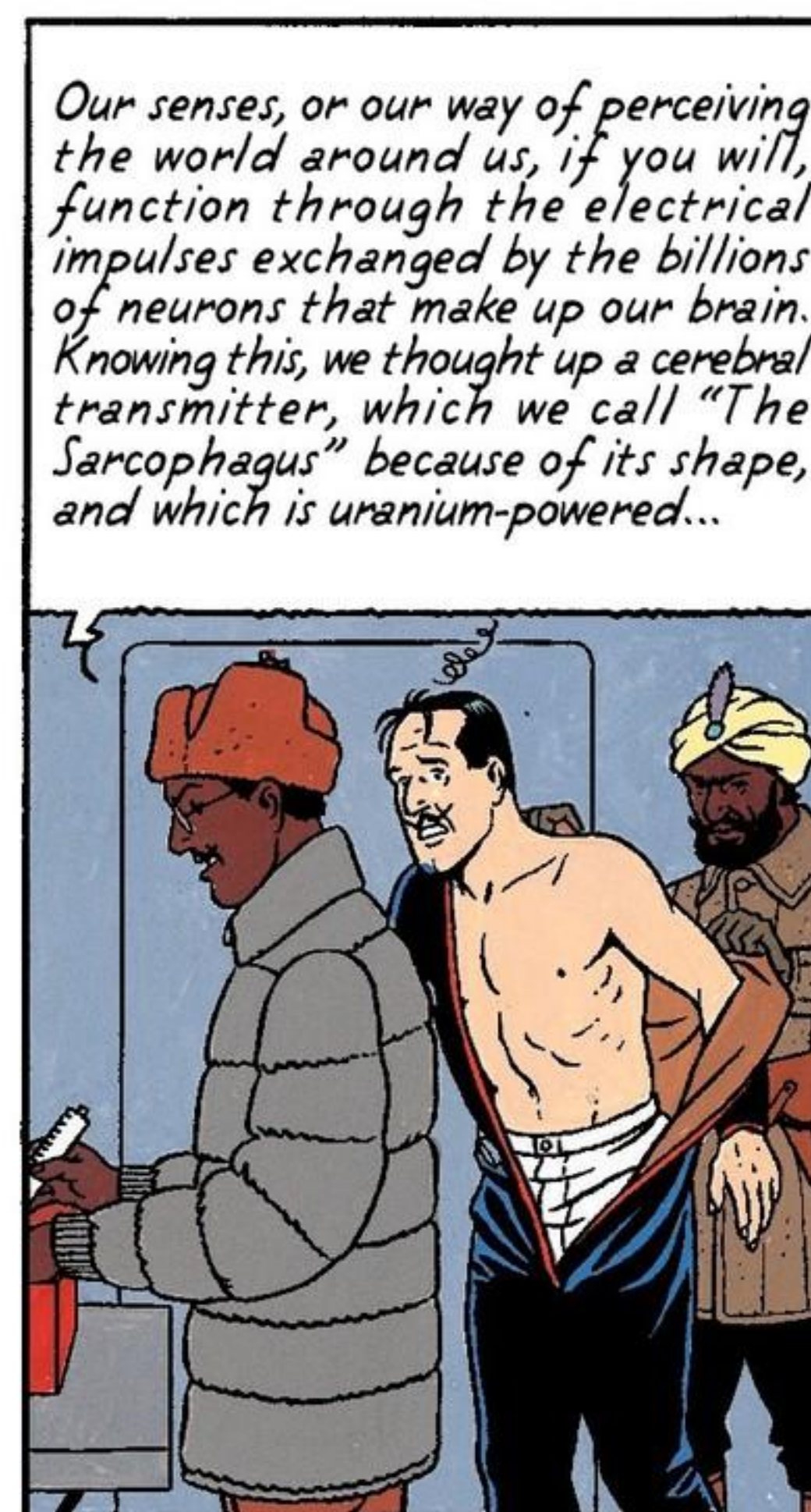
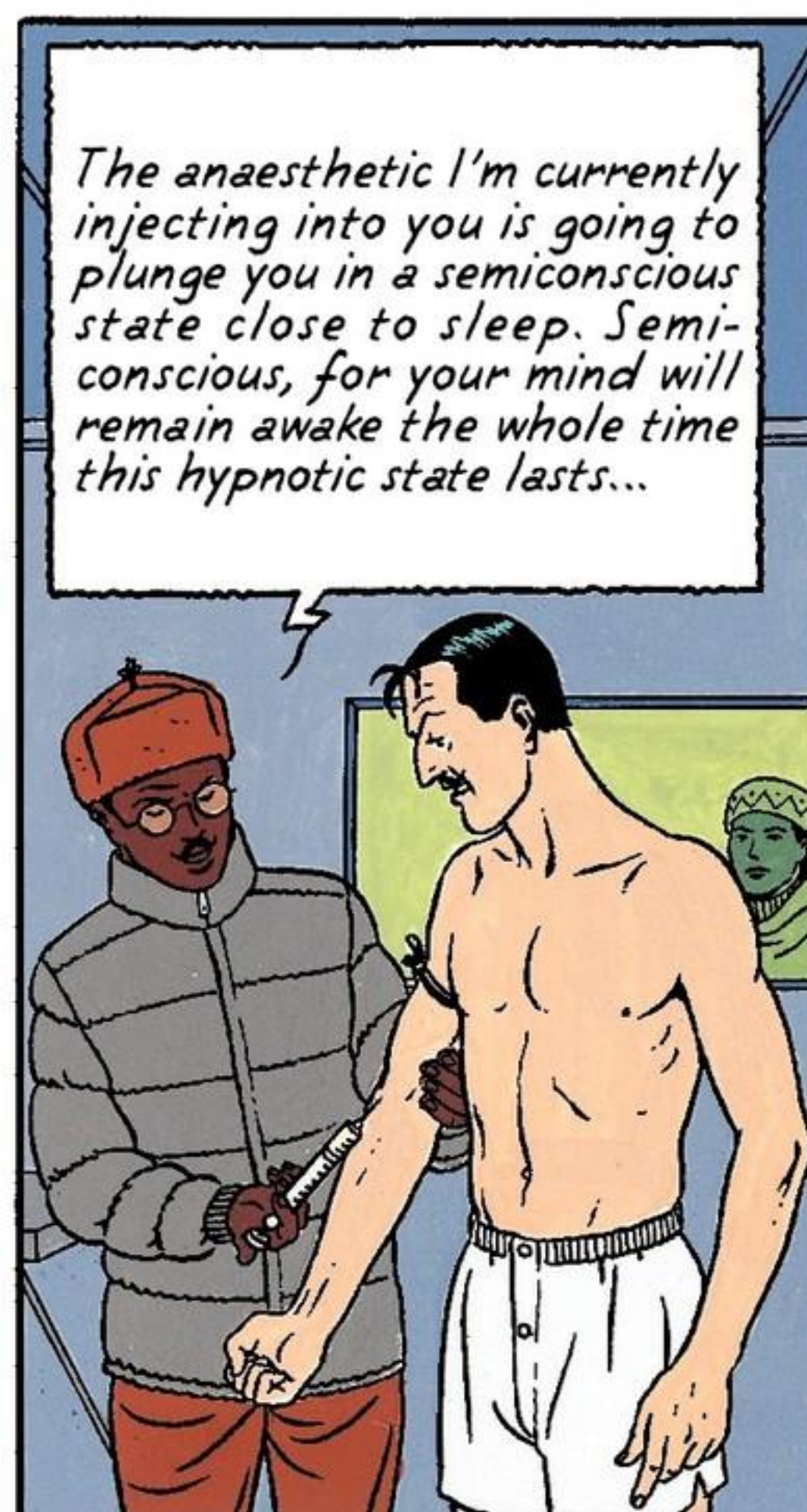
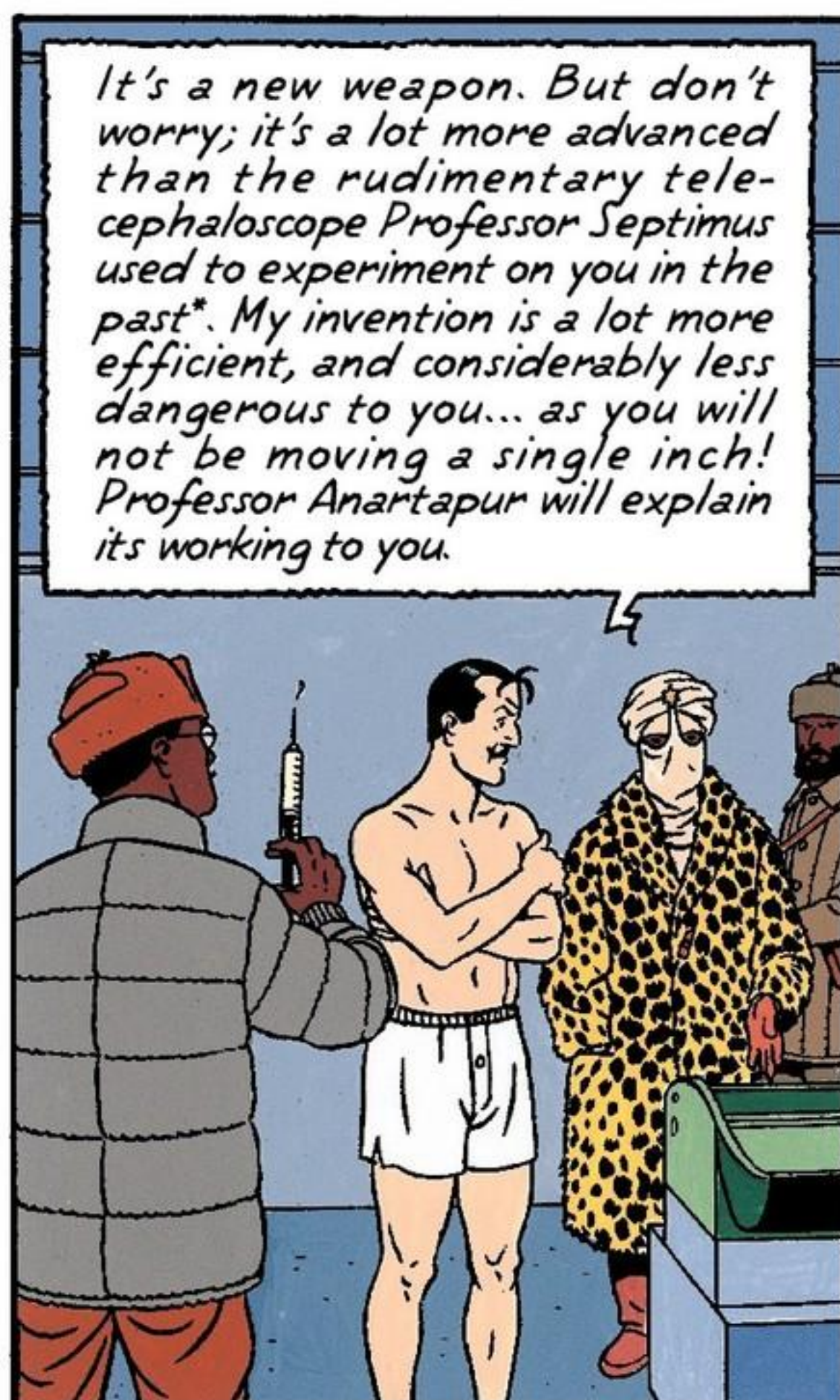
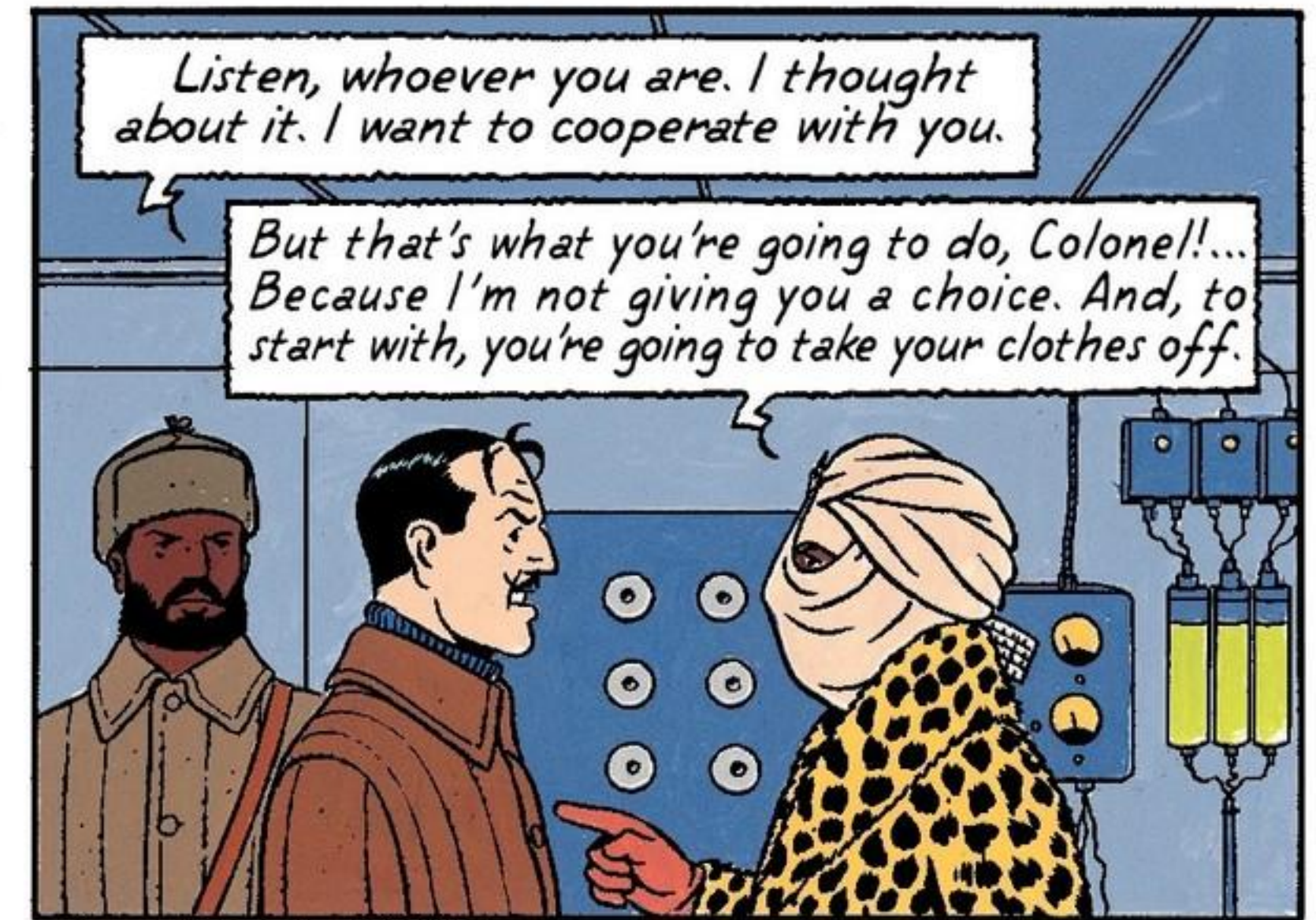
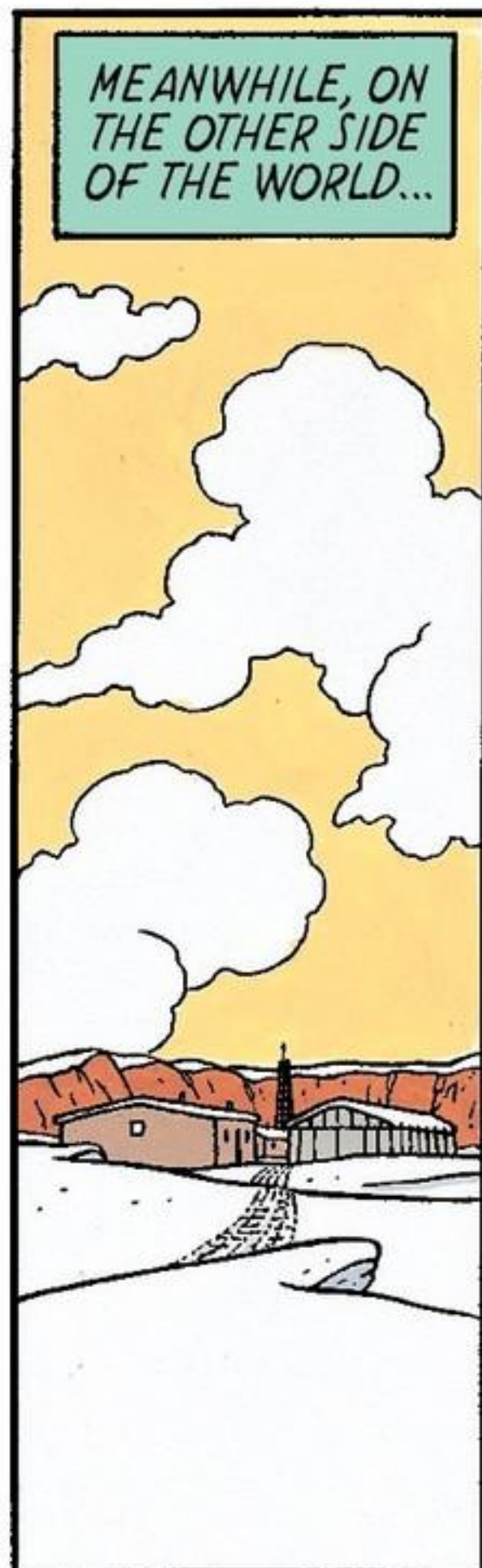


AFTER ORDERING THE MARINIÈRES MUSSELS THAT HAVE MADE THE RESTAURANT'S REPUTATION, BLAKE AT LAST EXPLAINS TO HIS FRIEND THE REASONS FOR HIS PRESENCE.



*M15: BRITISH COUNTERINTELLIGENCE SERVICE





*SEE THE YELLOW M.

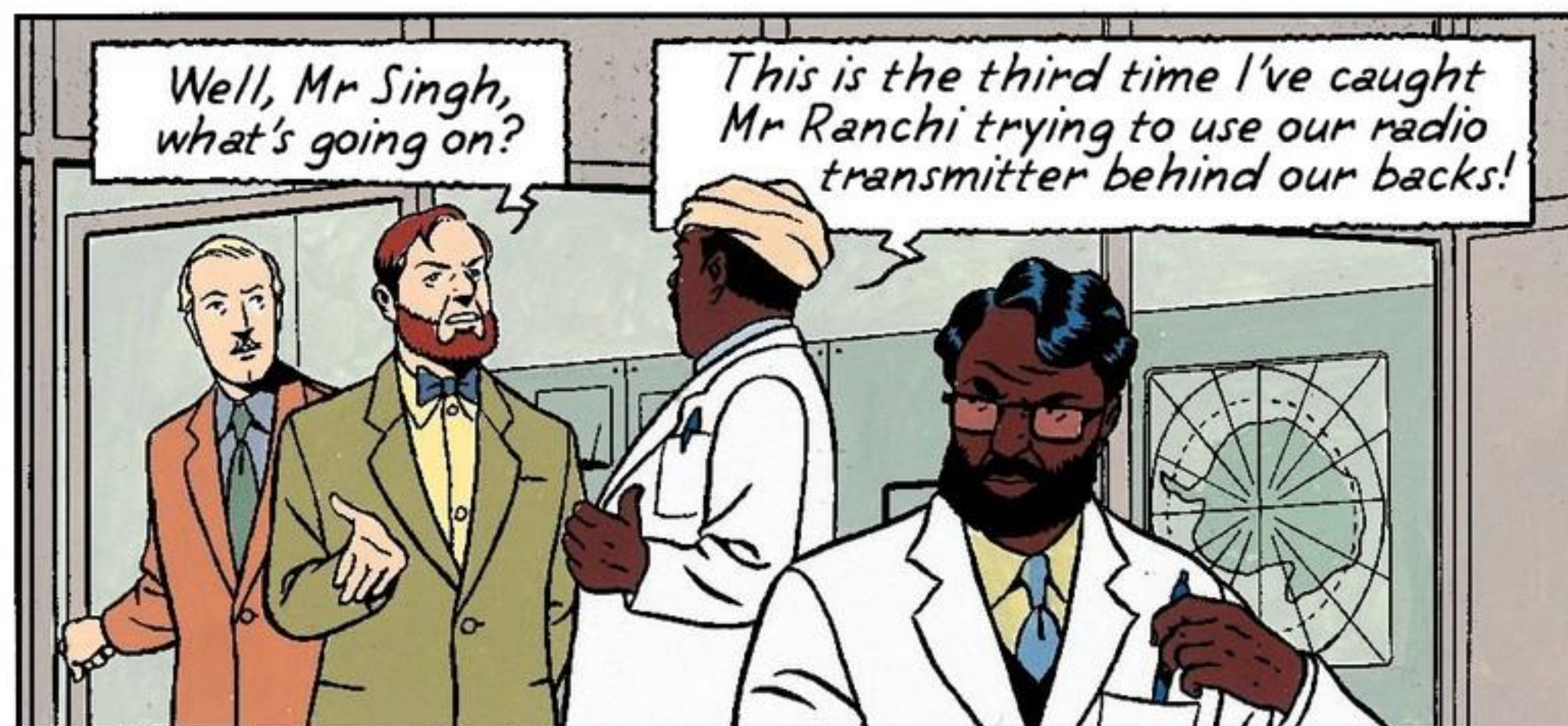


AT THAT INSTANT, AFTER SPENDING A NIGHTMARE-FREE NIGHT UNDER DOCTOR CLAE'S ROOF, BLAKE AND MORTIMER ARE GETTING BACK TO THE BRITISH PAVILION.



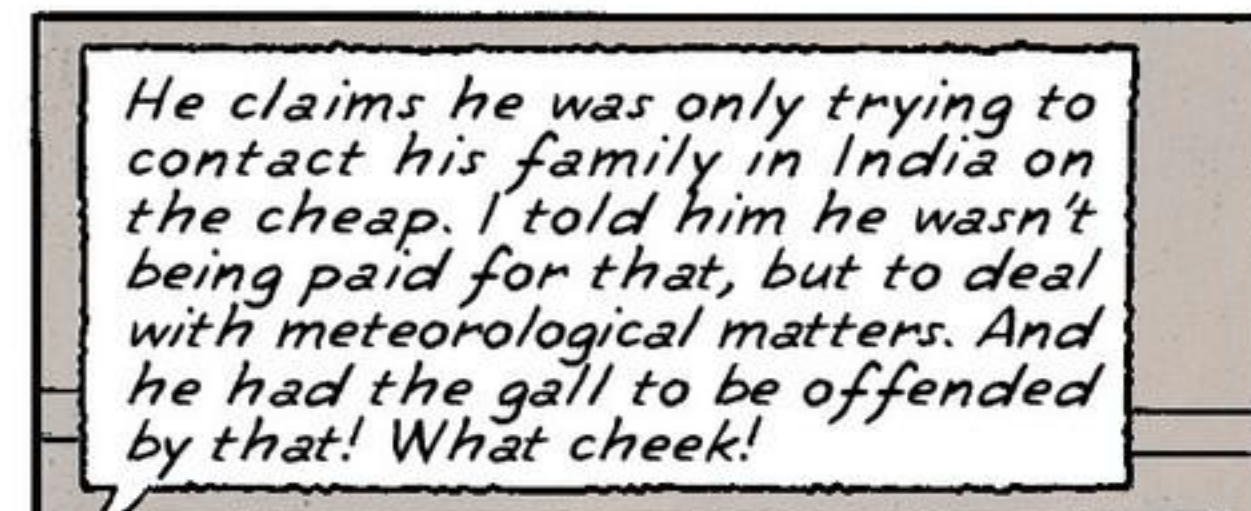
Say, Philip! It looks like there's some tension among your team!

This is a first! Let's go see what it's about.

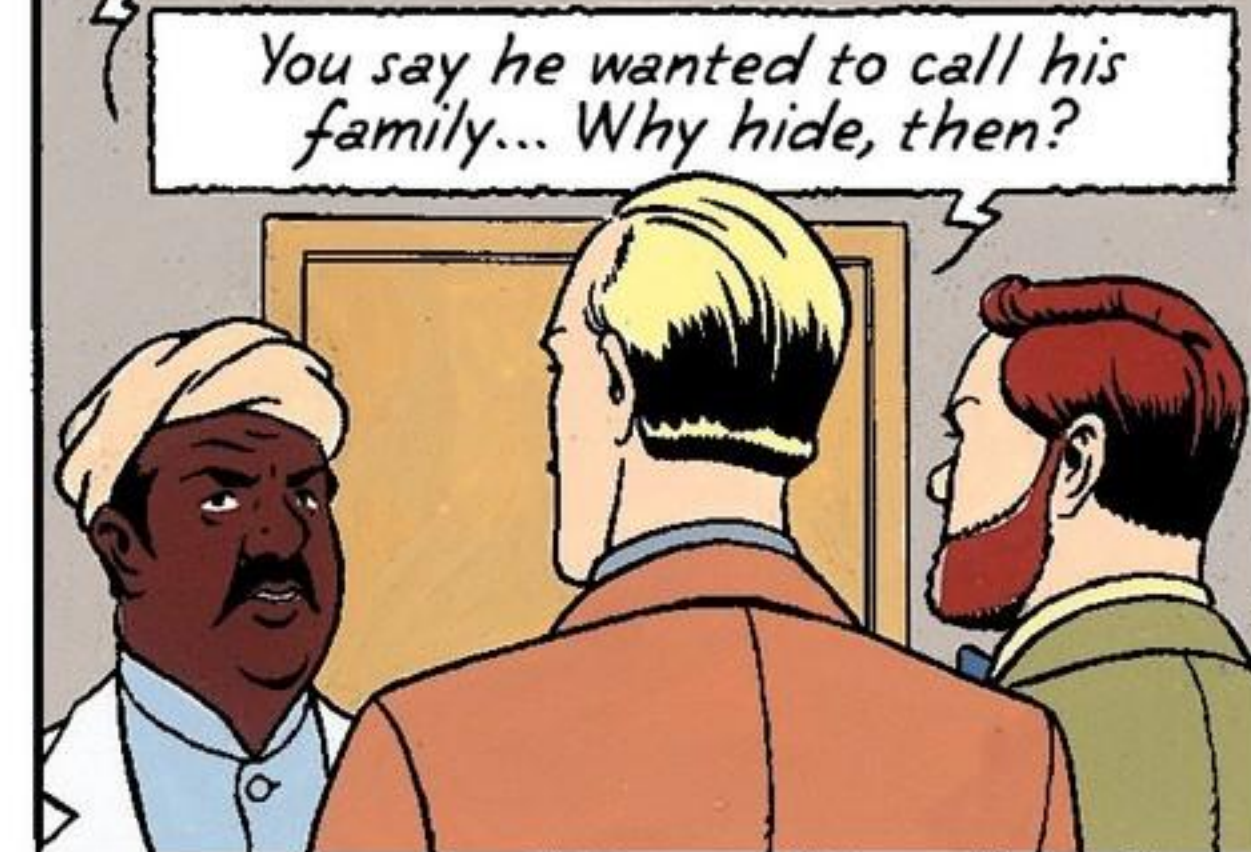


Well, Mr Singh, what's going on?

This is the third time I've caught Mr Ranchi trying to use our radio transmitter behind our backs!



He claims he was only trying to contact his family in India on the cheap. I told him he wasn't being paid for that, but to deal with meteorological matters. And he had the gall to be offended by that! What cheek!



You say he wanted to call his family... Why hide, then?



We'll see about that later. For the moment, let's focus on this first test we're about to conduct with Halley Station.



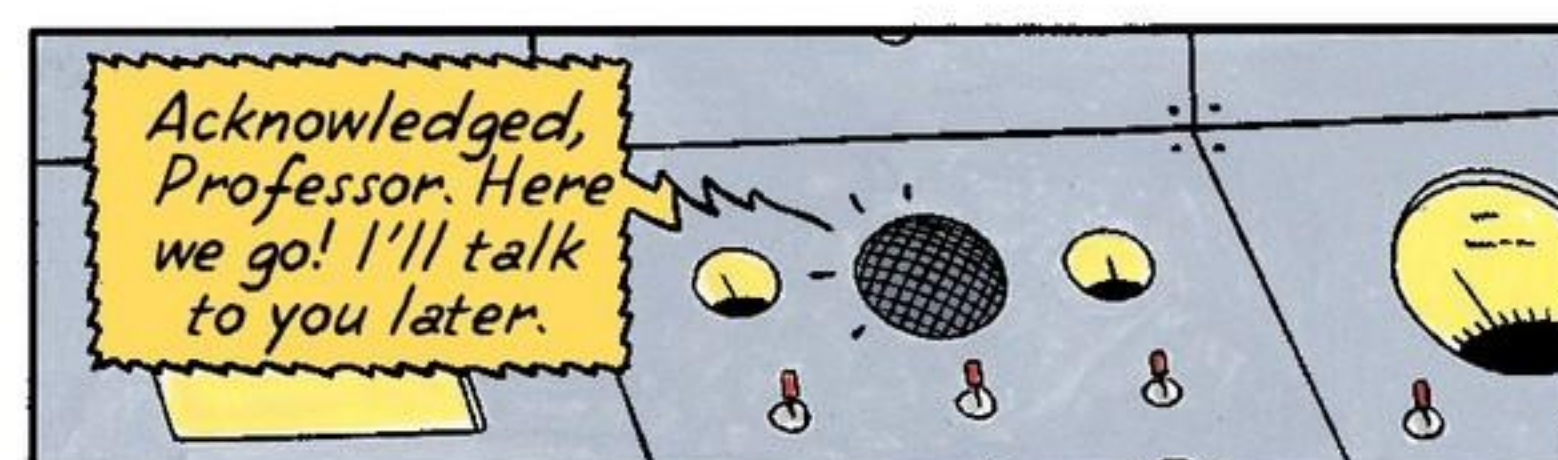
Forty-five minutes later, all the personnel are at their post, and Professor Mortimer is calling the British Antarctica team to inform them that the Brussels team is ready.

Philip Mortimer to Captain Byrd: Do you read me?... I repeat...

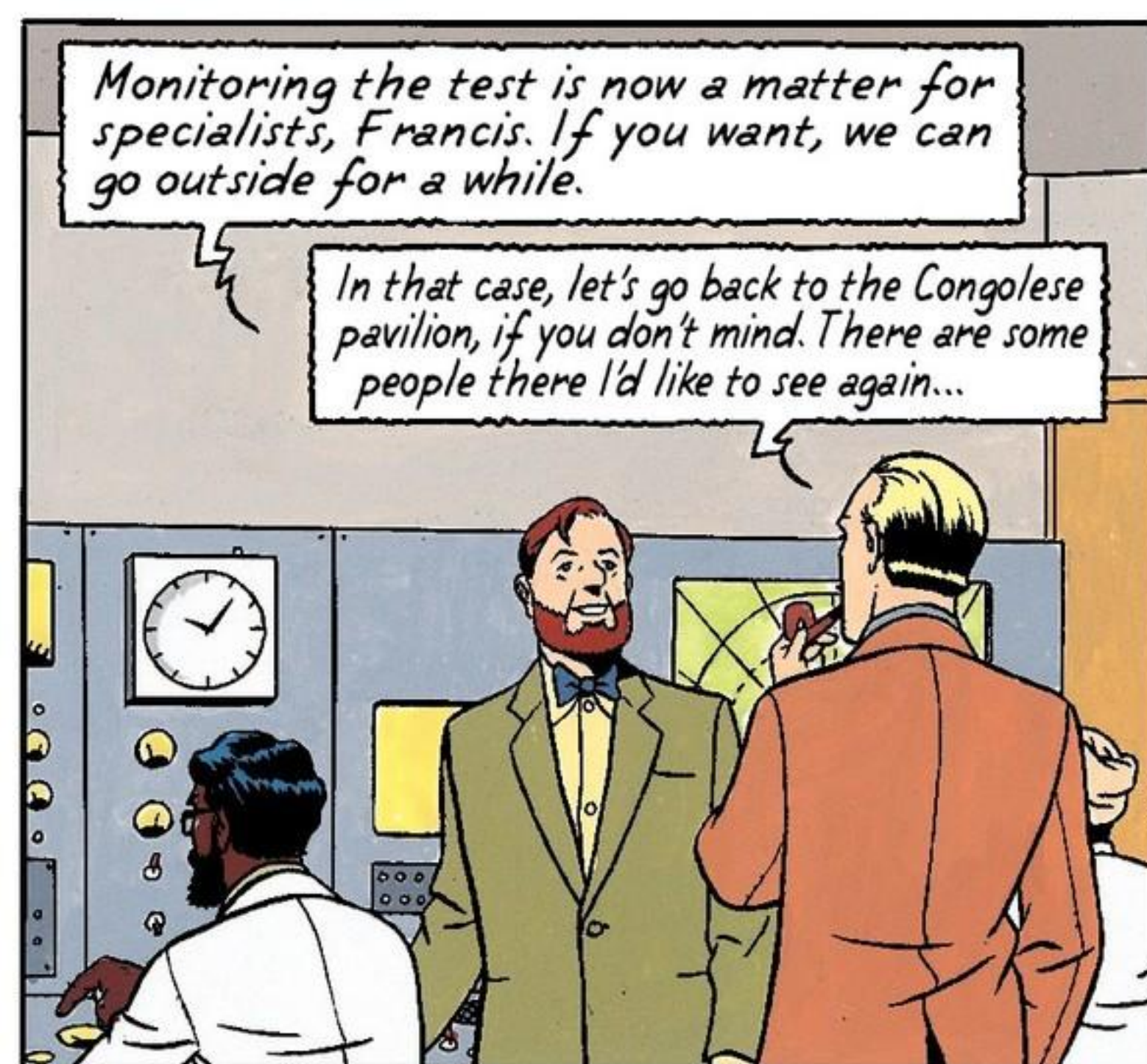


I read you five by five, Professor. We're ready, and only awaiting your order to begin broadcasting our data continuously.

In that case, let's get started, Captain. I propose we keep this first connection open until noon. We'll assess the result later in the afternoon.

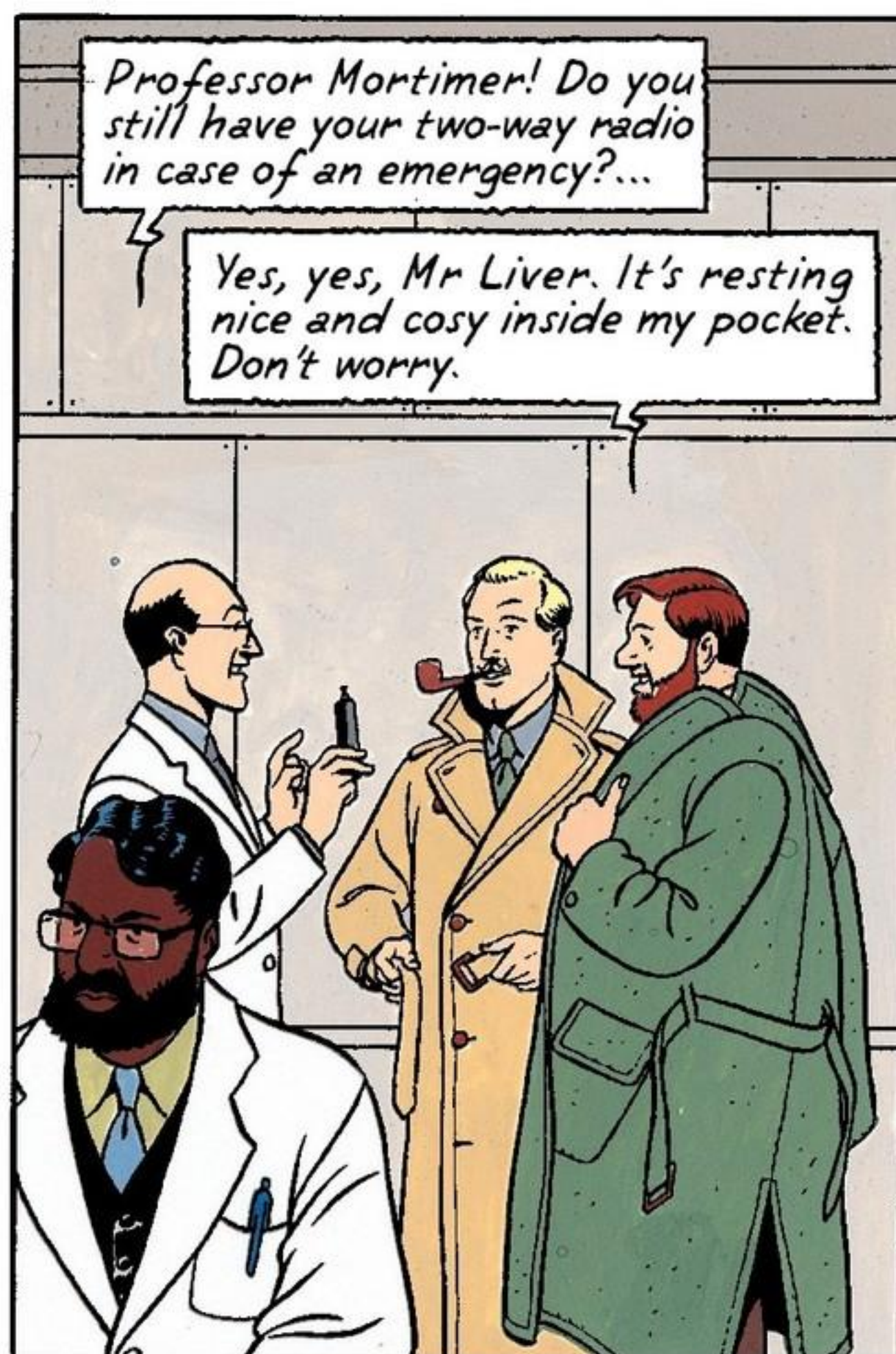


Acknowledged, Professor. Here we go! I'll talk to you later.



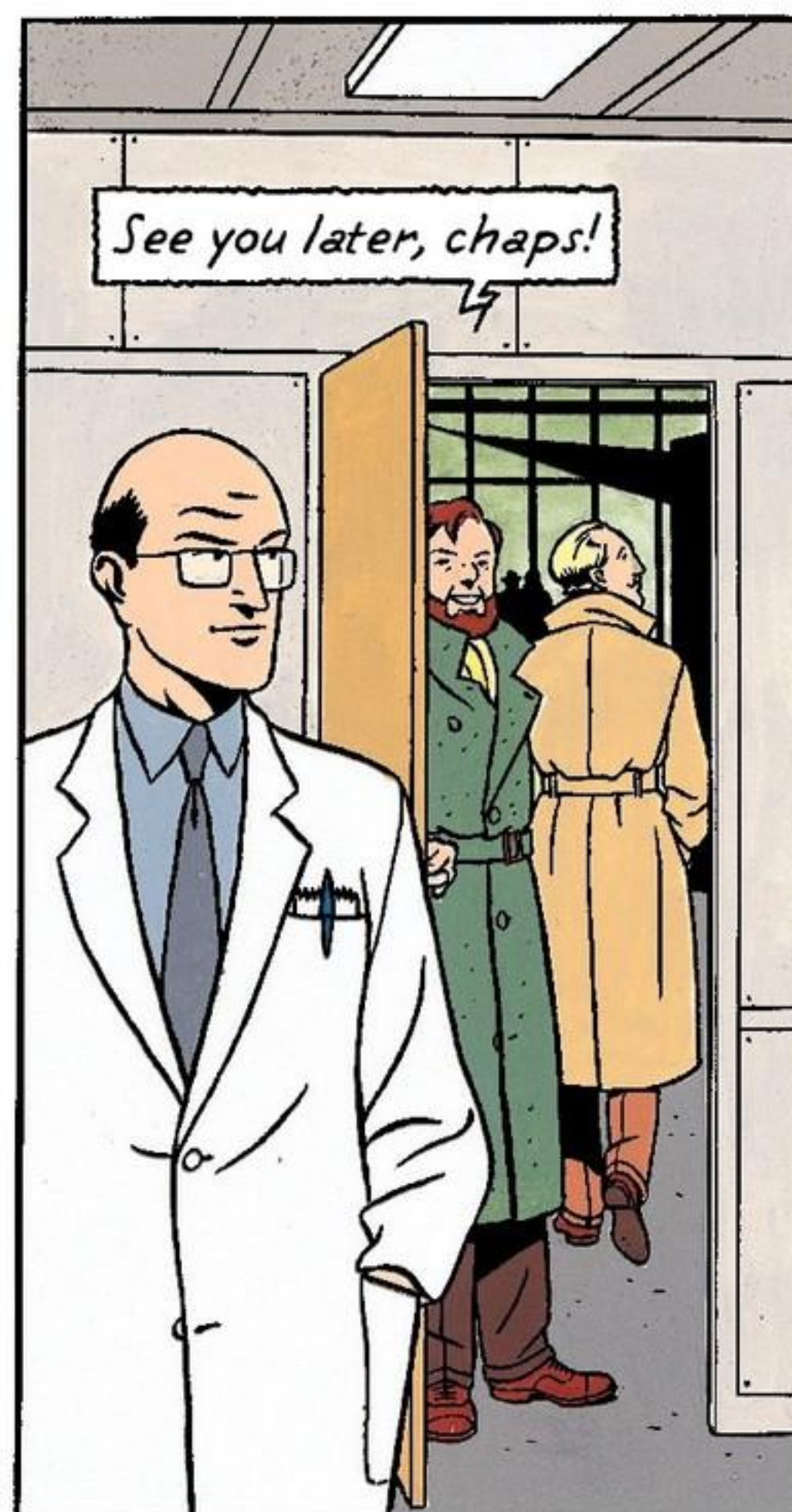
Monitoring the test is now a matter for specialists, Francis. If you want, we can go outside for a while.

In that case, let's go back to the Congolese pavilion, if you don't mind. There are some people there I'd like to see again...

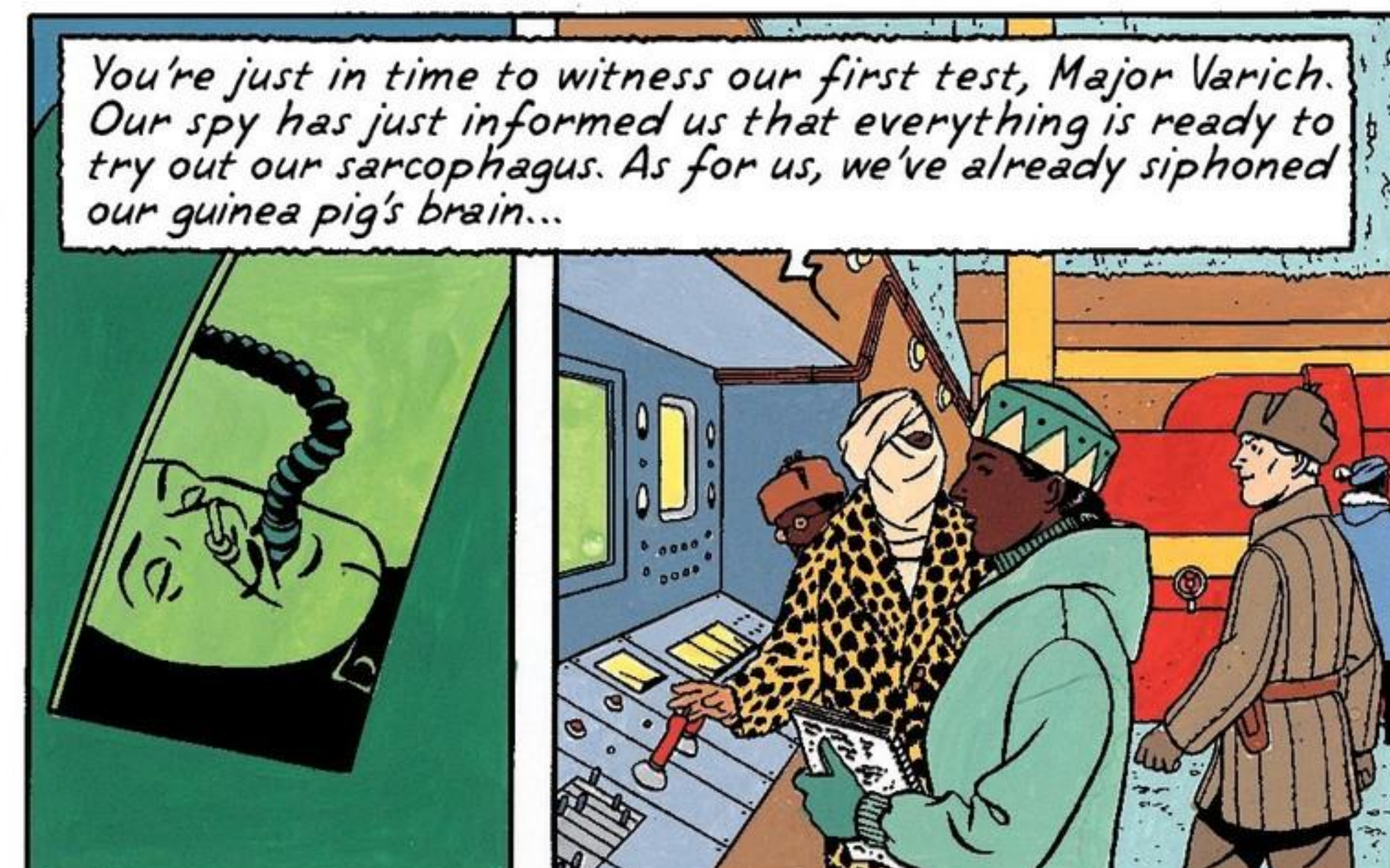


Professor Mortimer! Do you still have your two-way radio in case of an emergency?...

Yes, yes, Mr Liver. It's resting nice and cosy inside my pocket. Don't worry.



See you later, chaps!



You're just in time to witness our first test, Major Varich. Our spy has just informed us that everything is ready to try out our sarcophagus. As for us, we've already siphoned our guinea pig's brain...



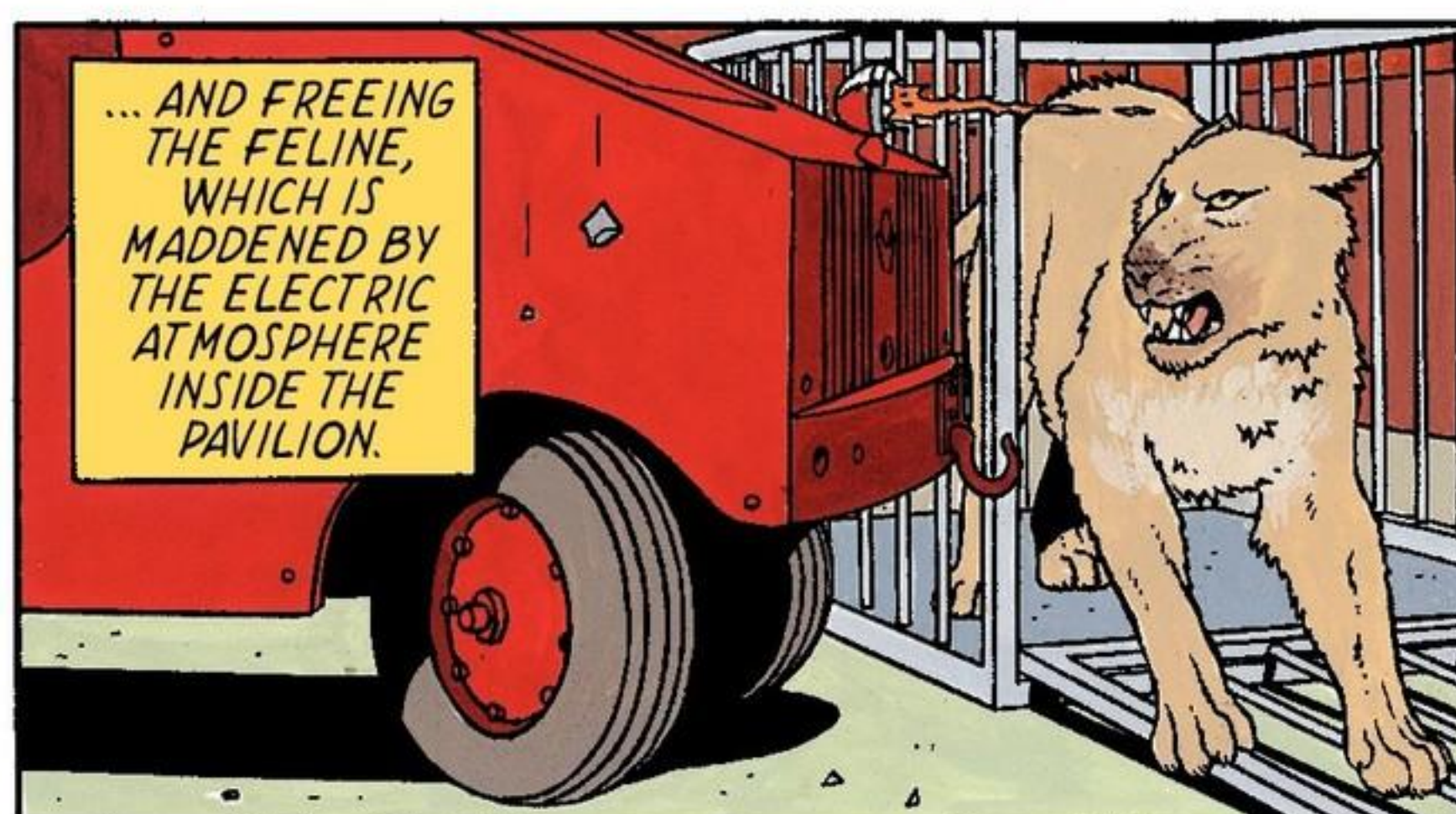
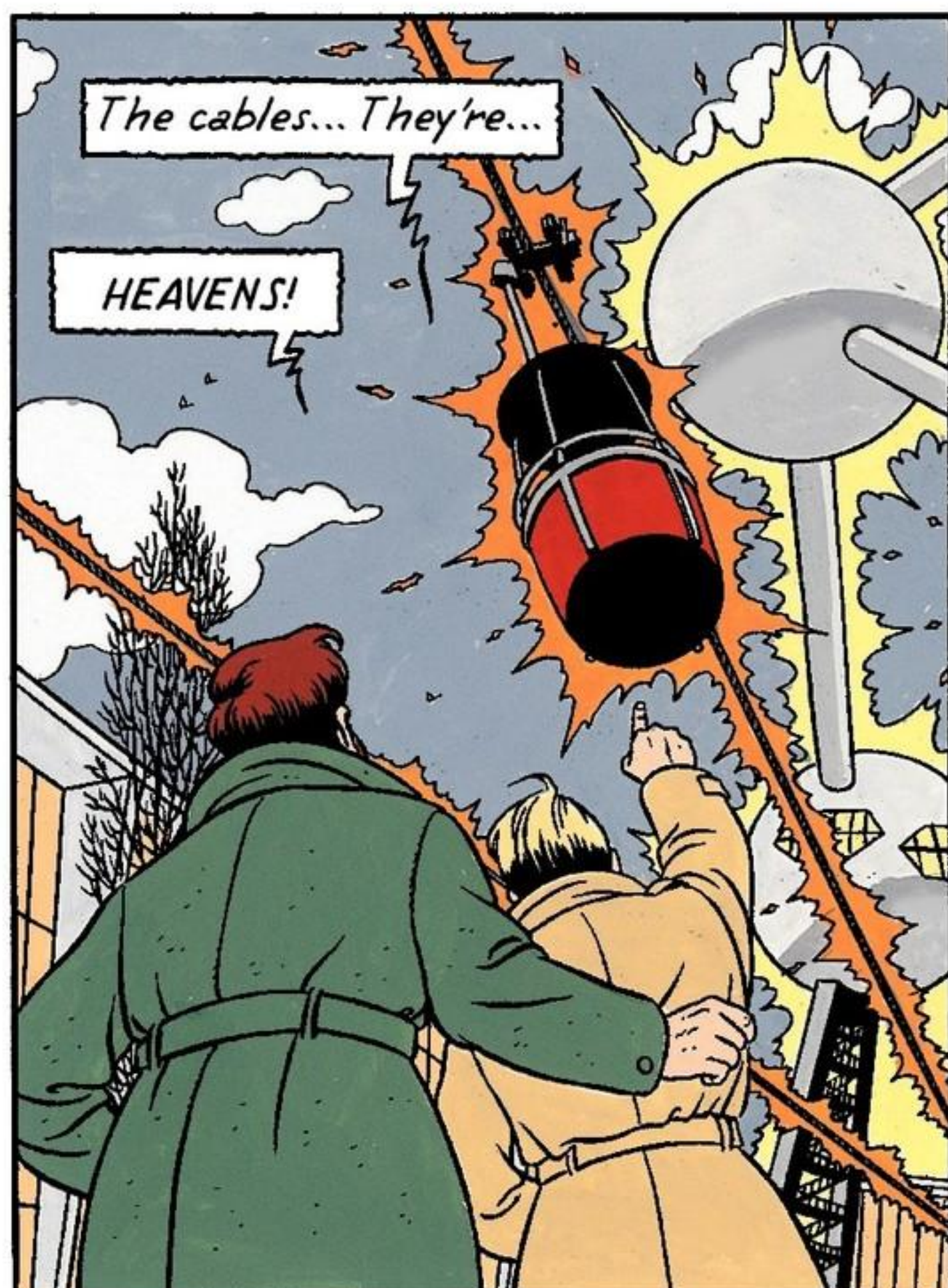
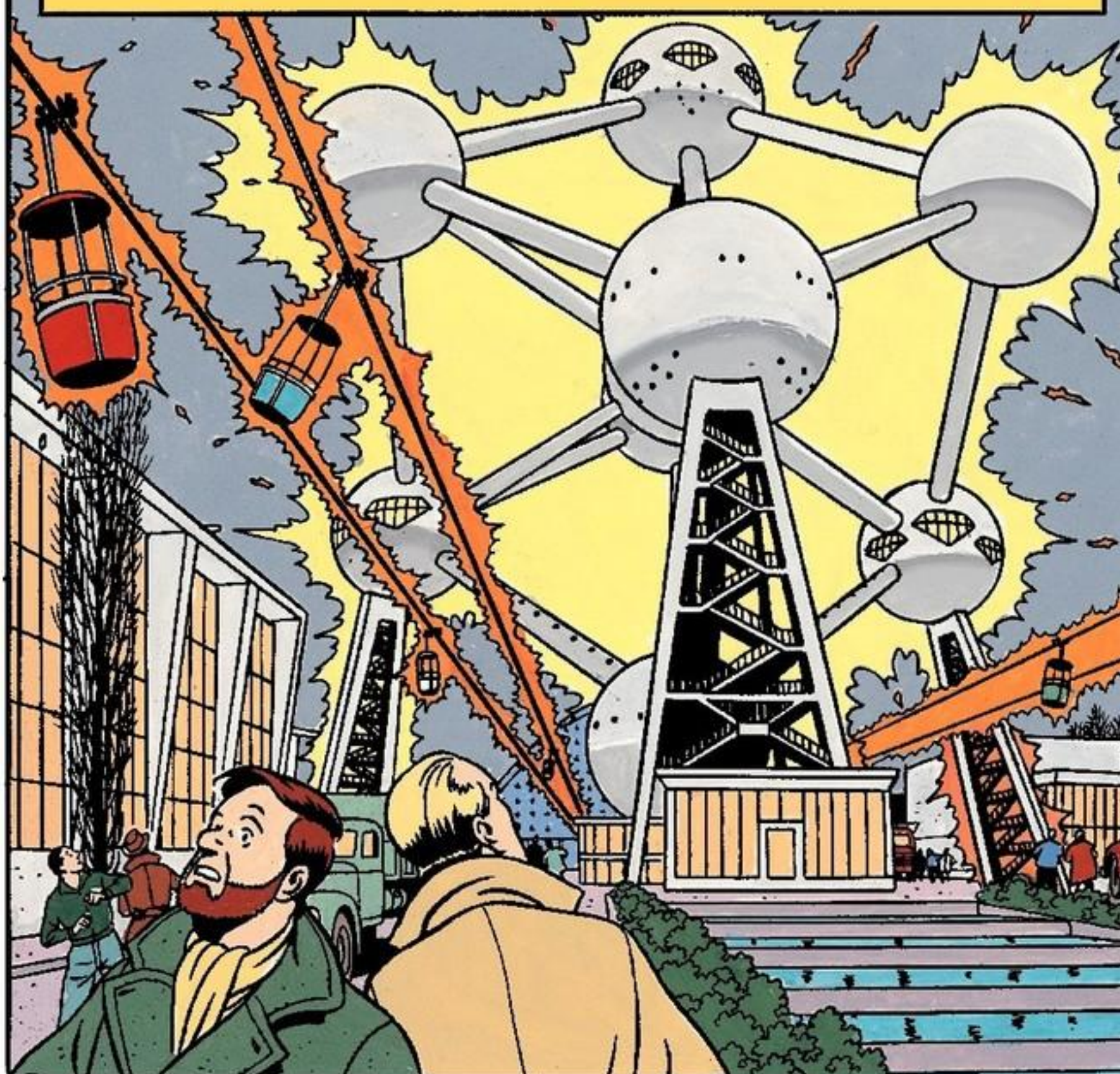
Click!

All we have to do now is send it to Brussels to do some damage! HA, HA, HA!

AFTER WALKING BRISKLY ALONG THE PATHS LEADING FROM THE BRITISH PAVILION TO THAT OF THE BELGIAN CONGO RUANDA-URUNDI, CAPTAIN BLAKE AND PROFESSOR MORTIMER SUDDENLY STOP, COMPLETELY ASTONISHED.

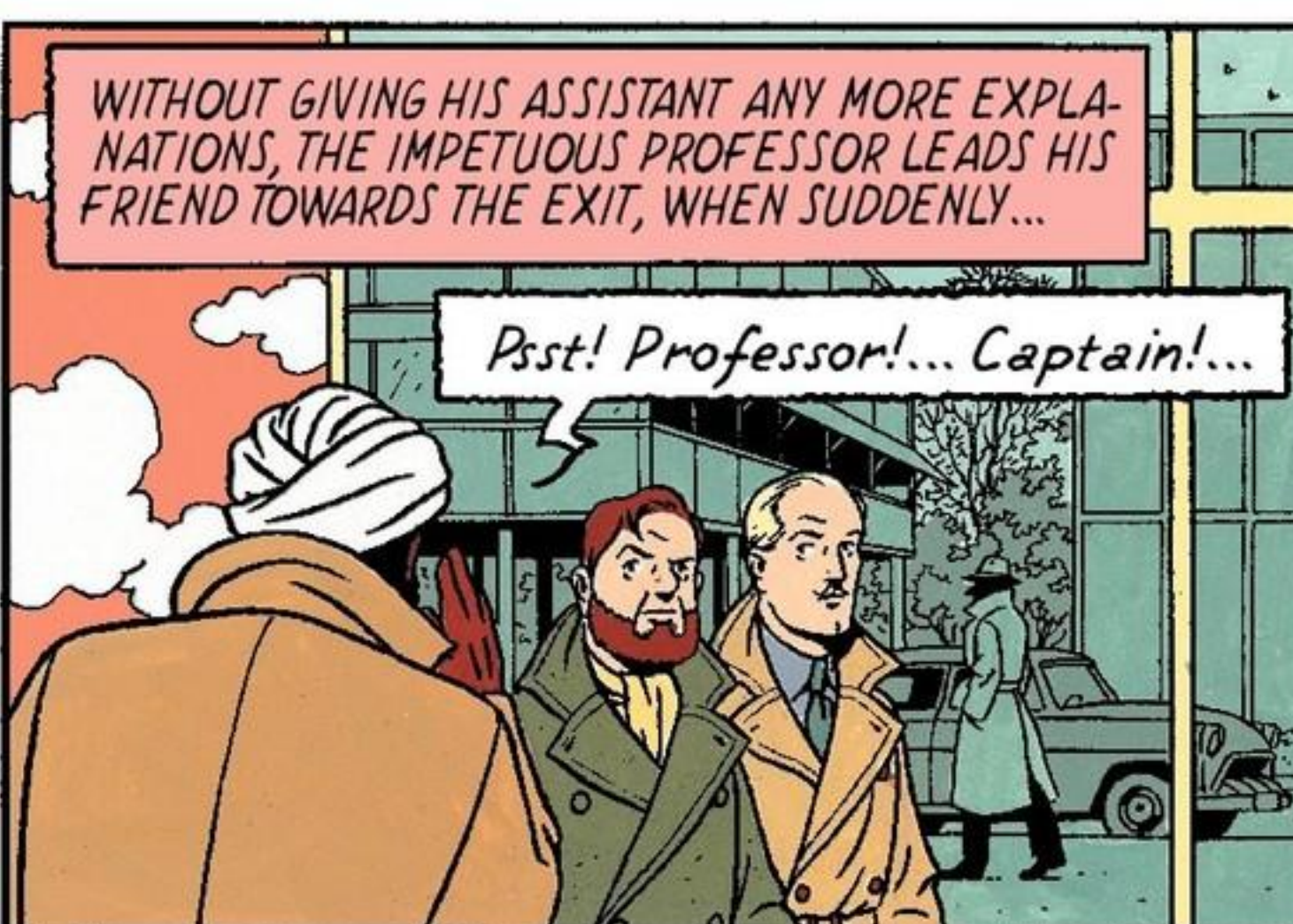
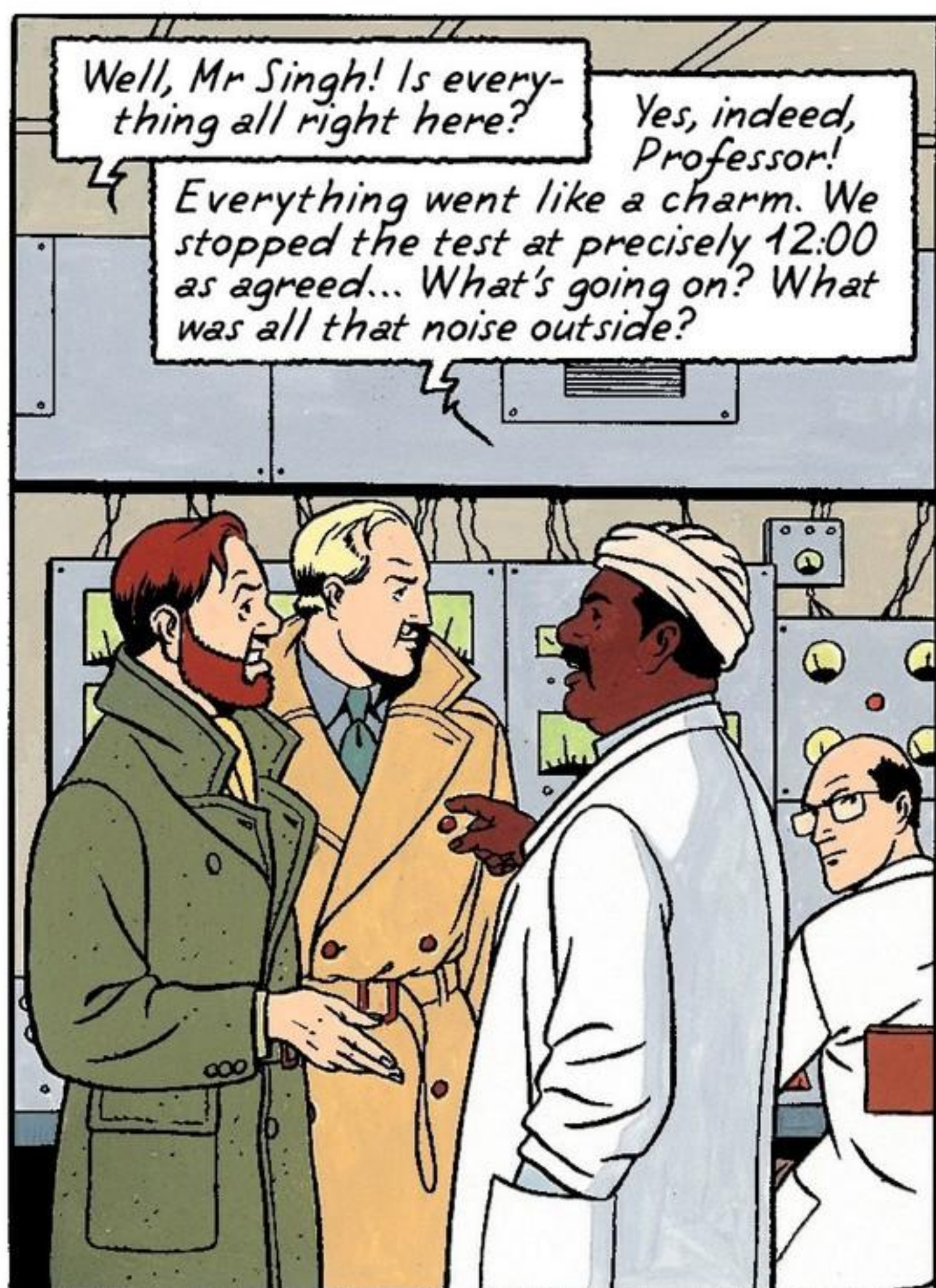


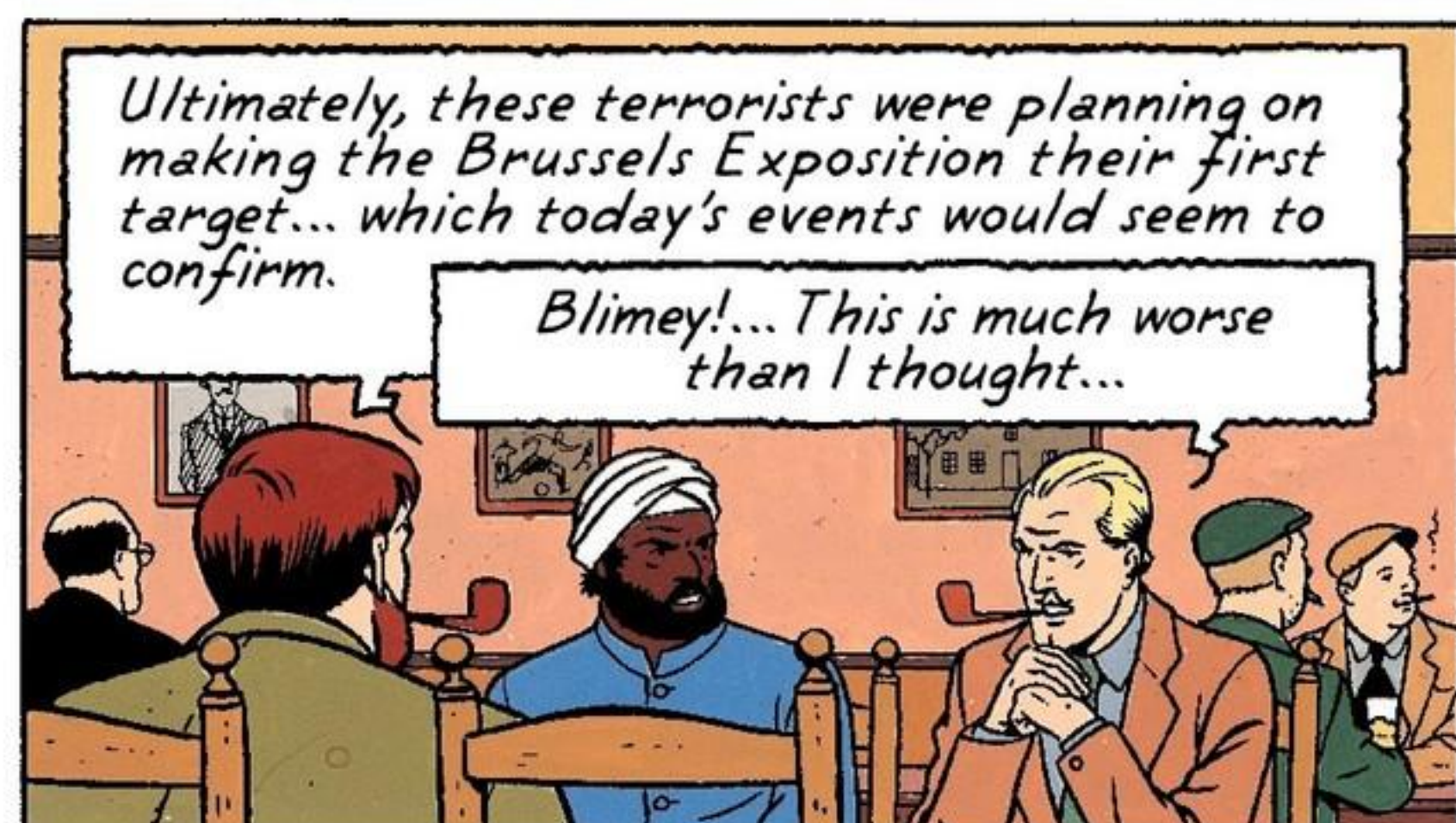
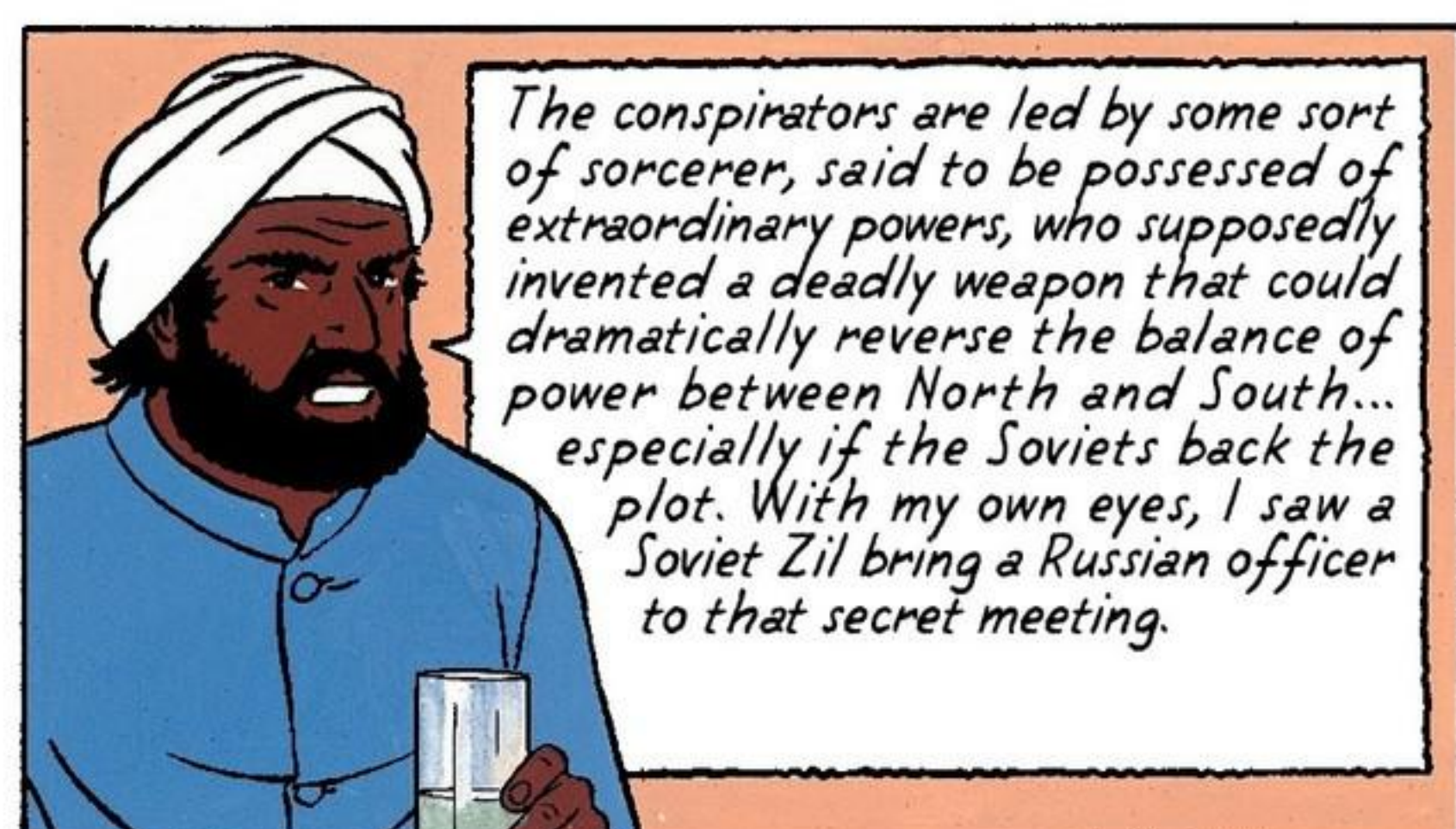
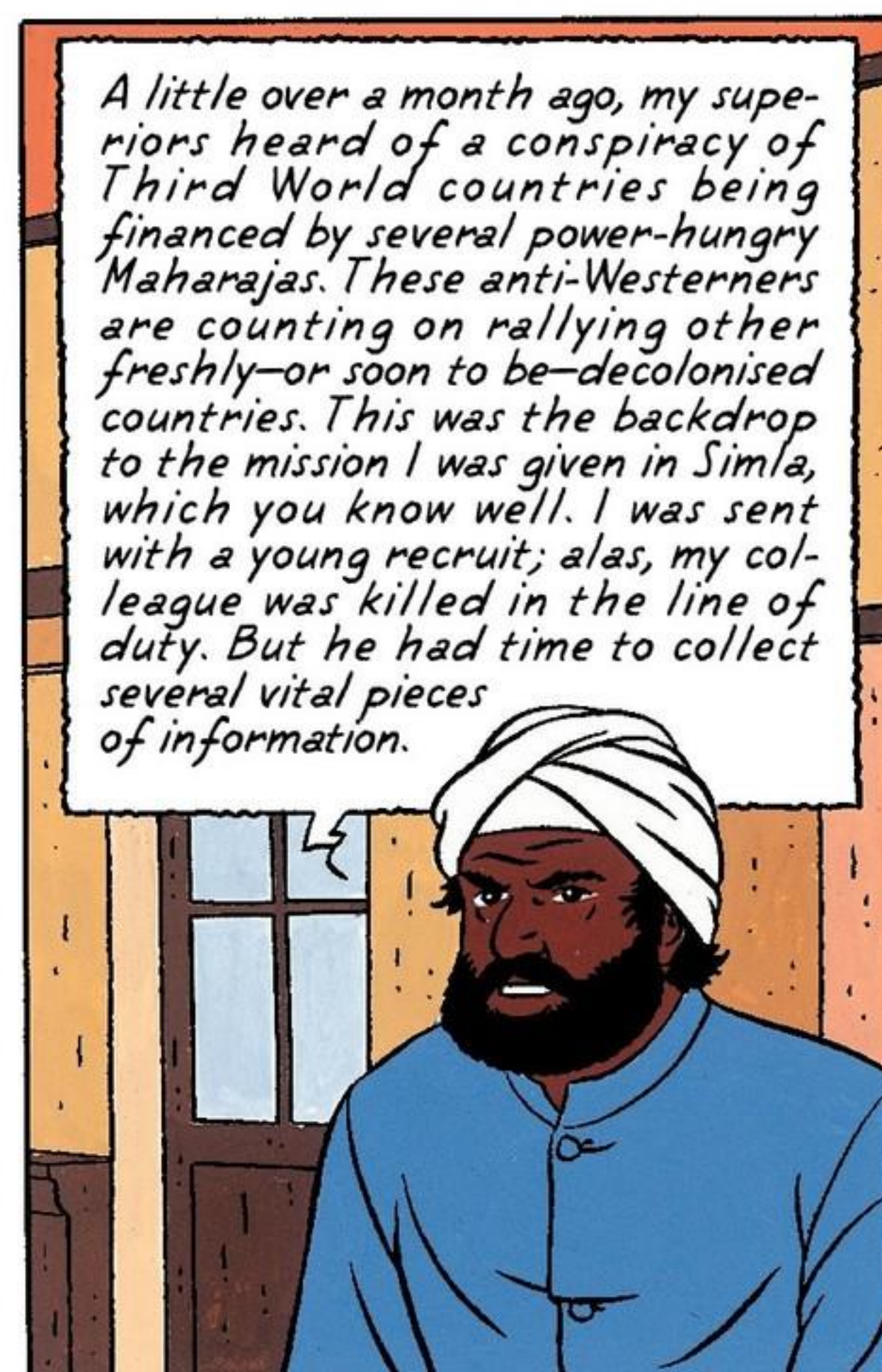
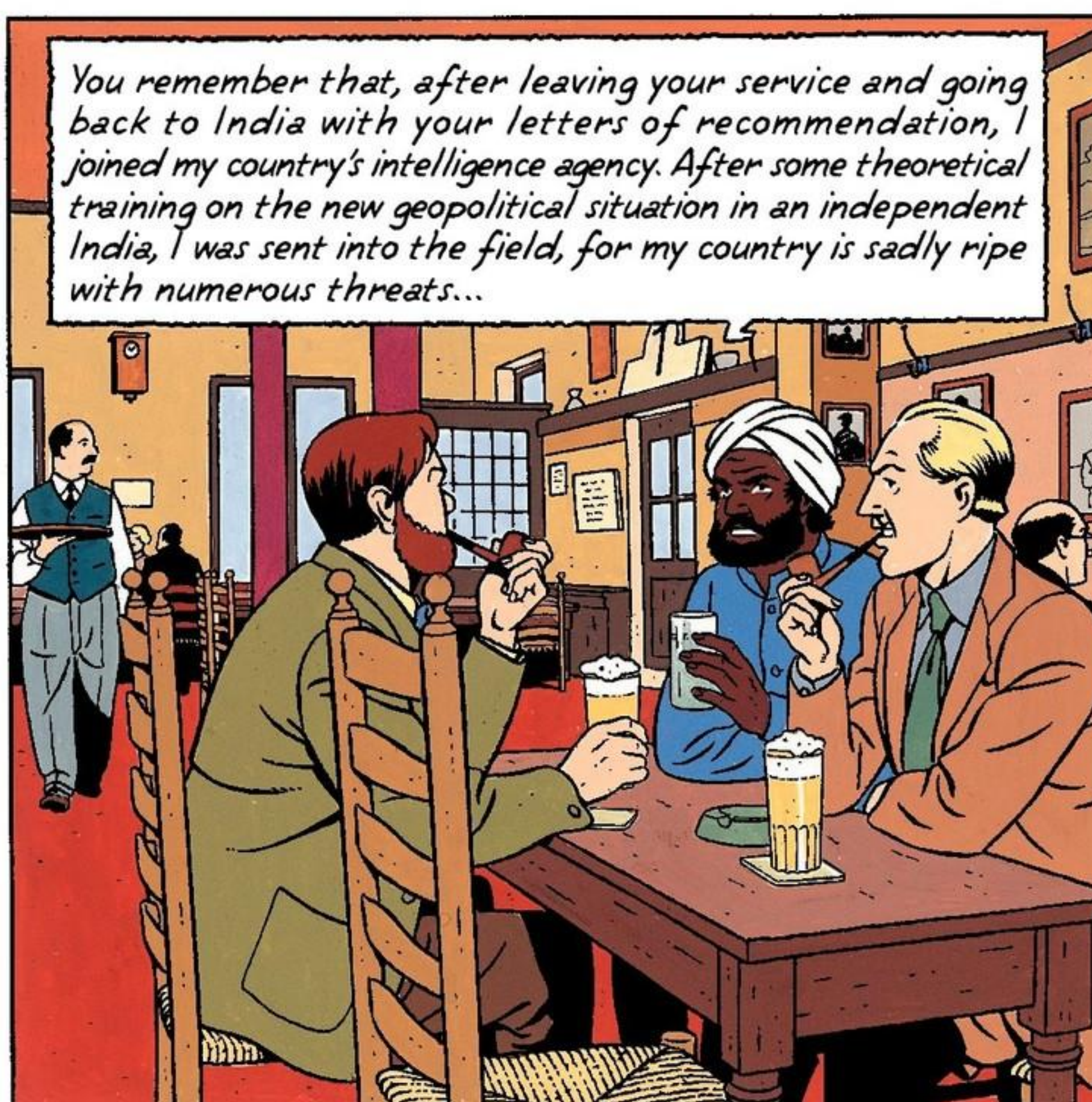
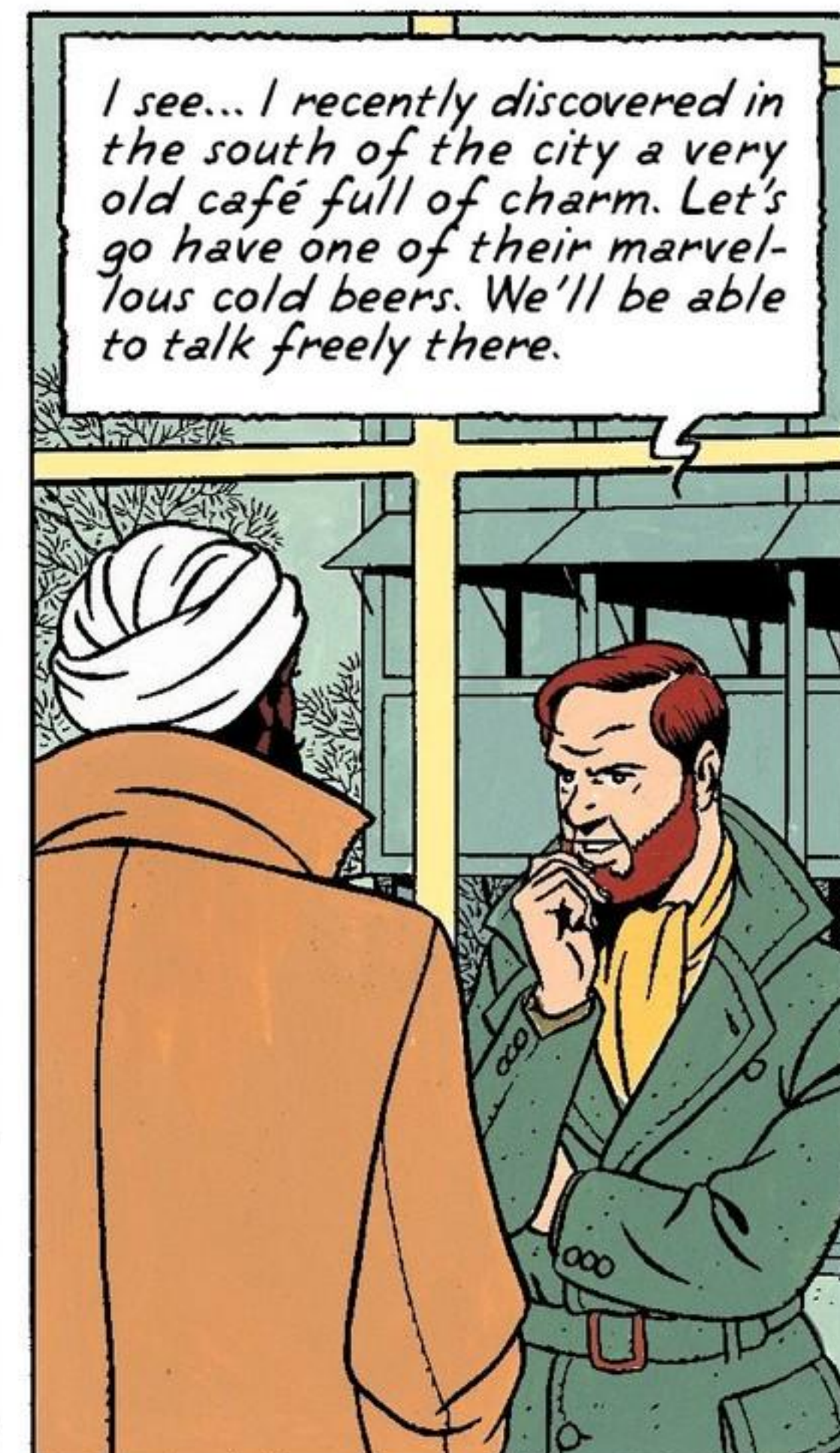
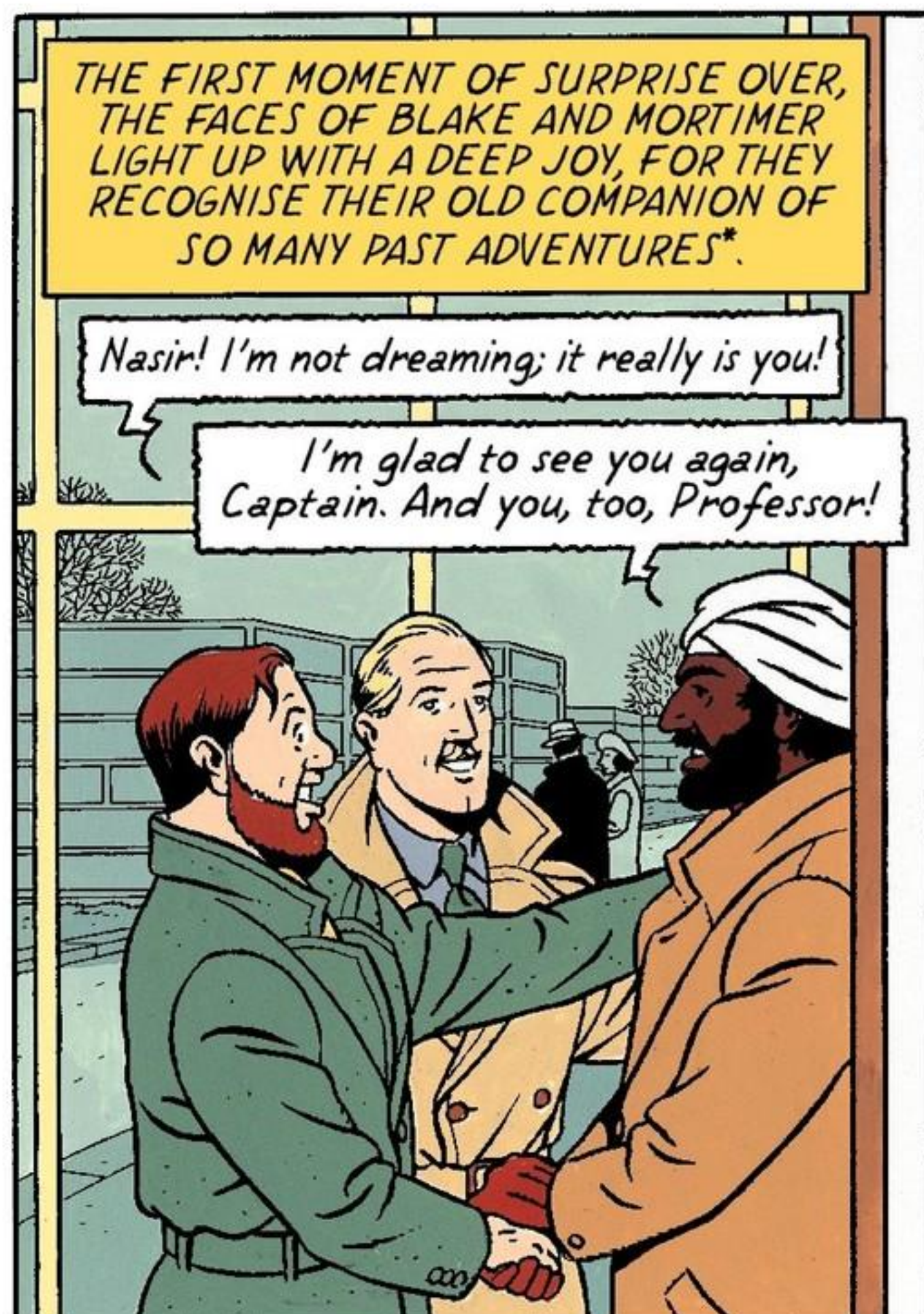
AS STRANGE SOUNDS FILL THE AIR, EVERY LIGHT IN THE ATOMIUM AND THE SURROUNDING PAVILIONS BEGINS TO BLINK ON AND OFF IN MIDDAY...



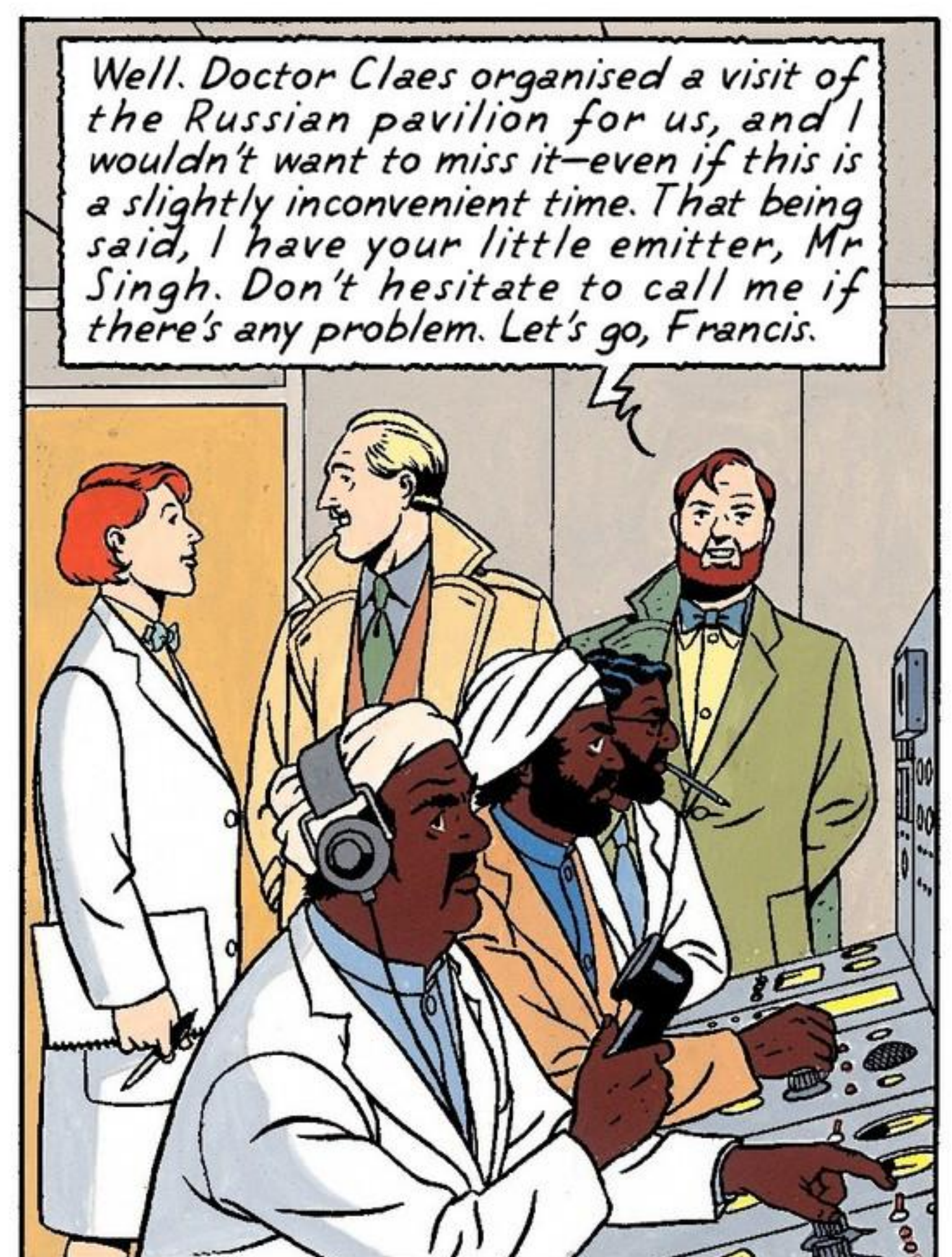
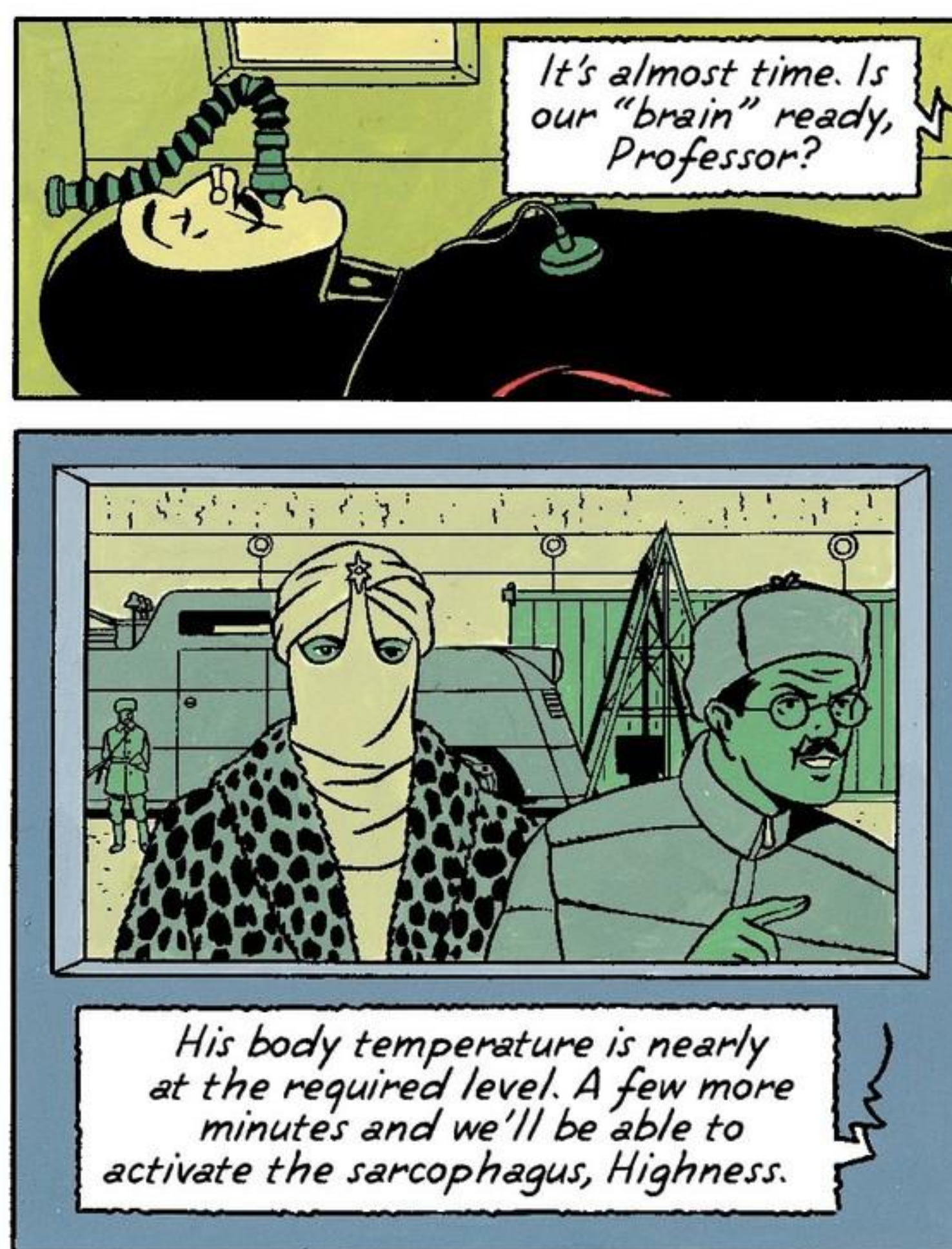
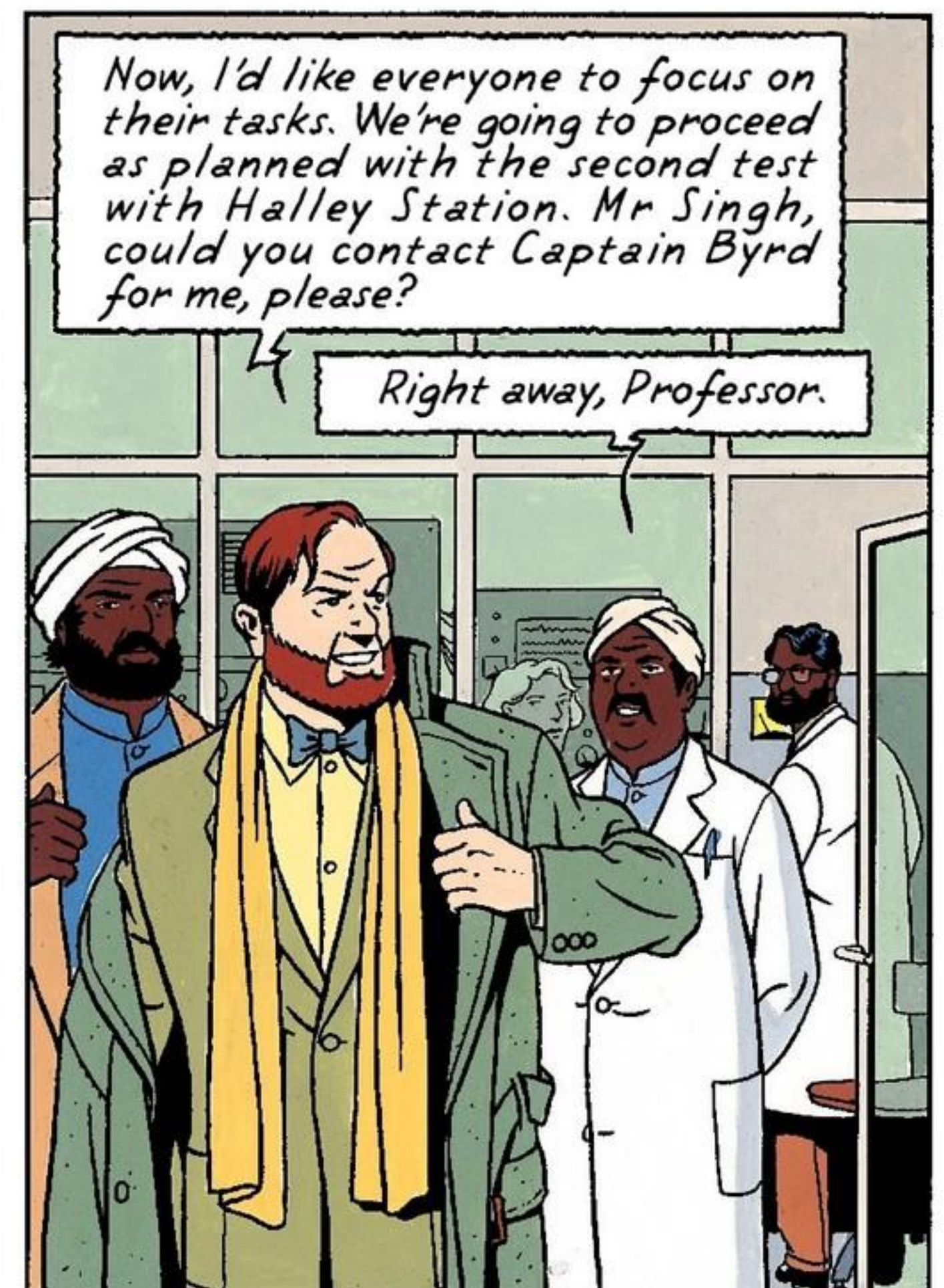
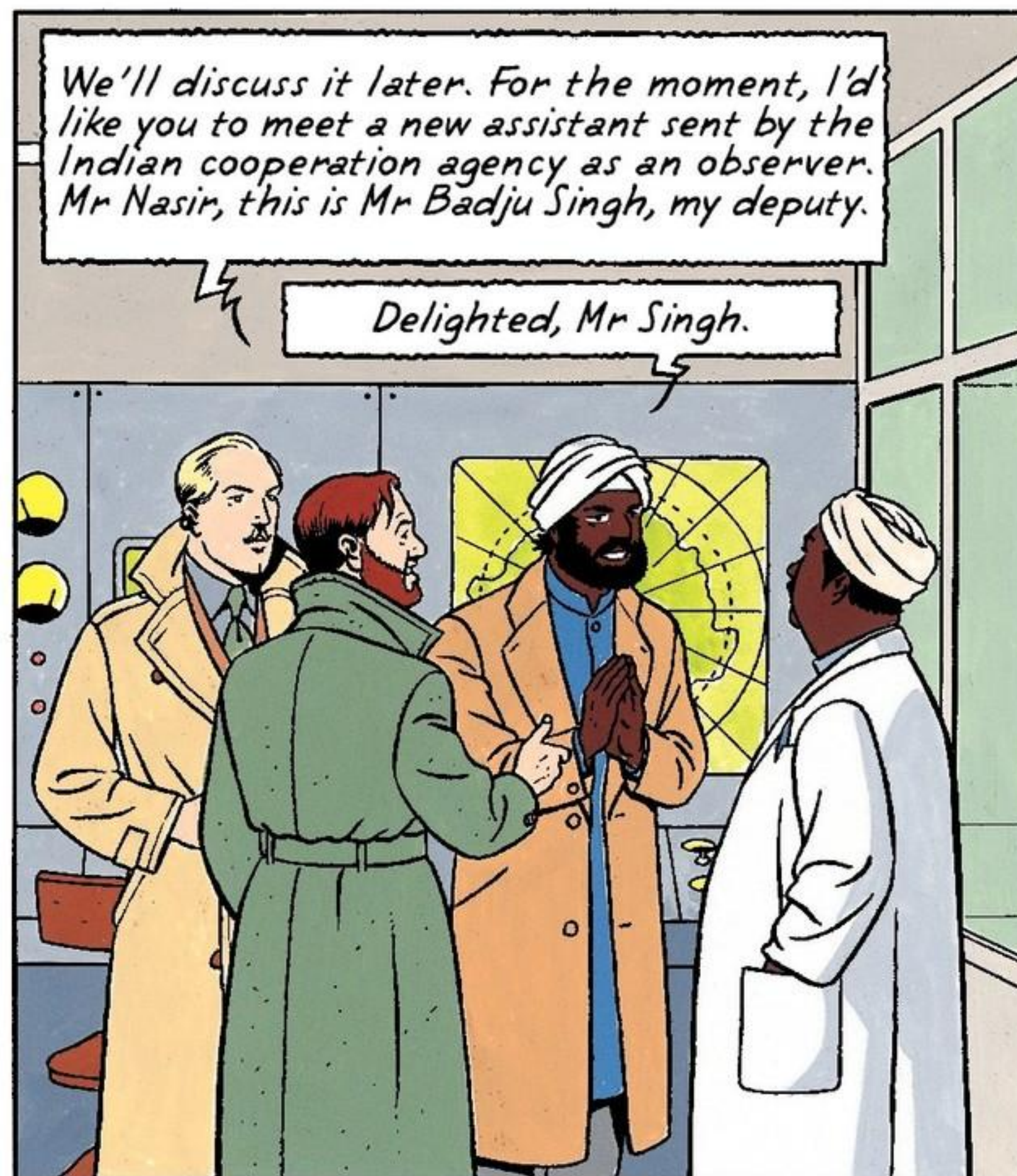
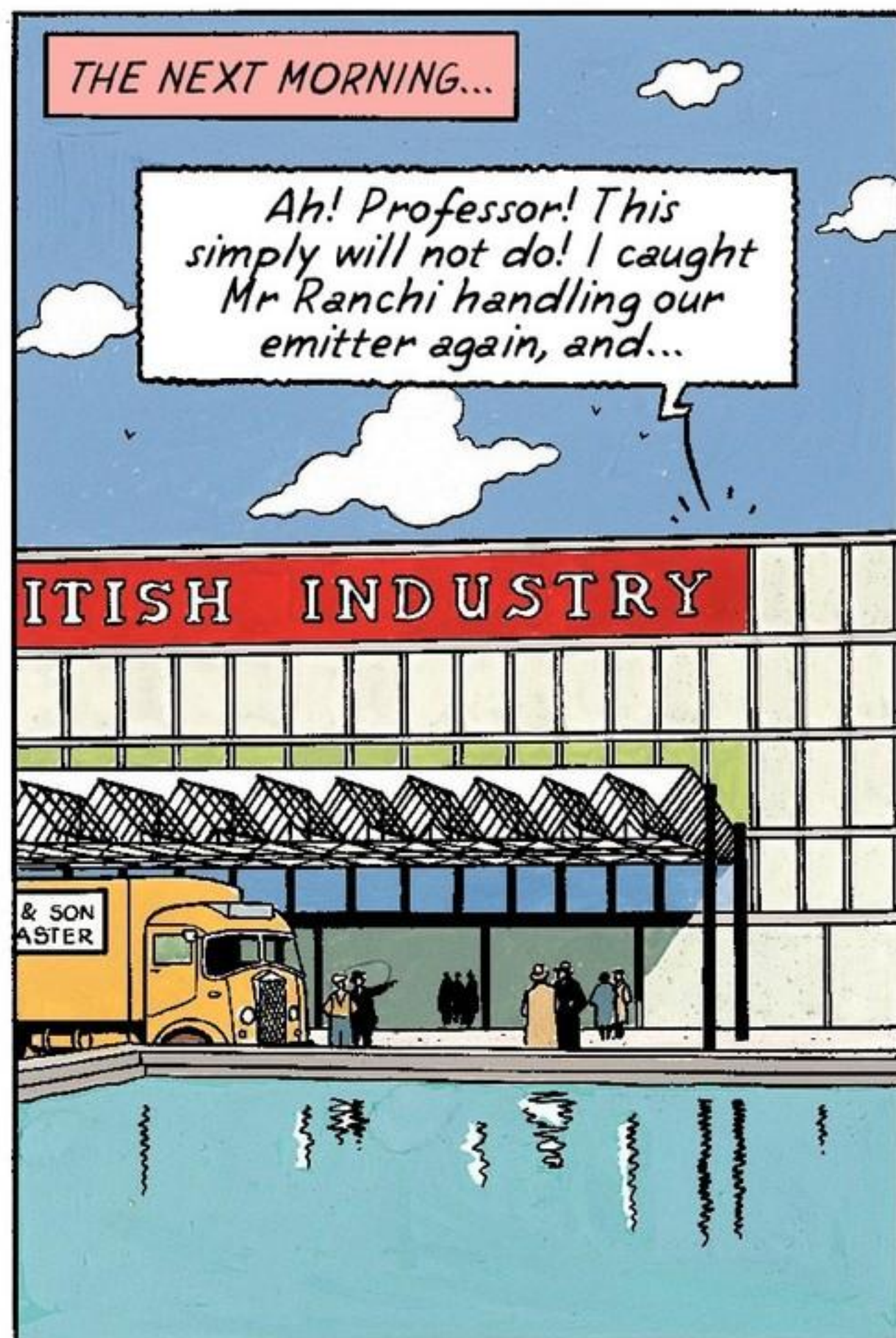


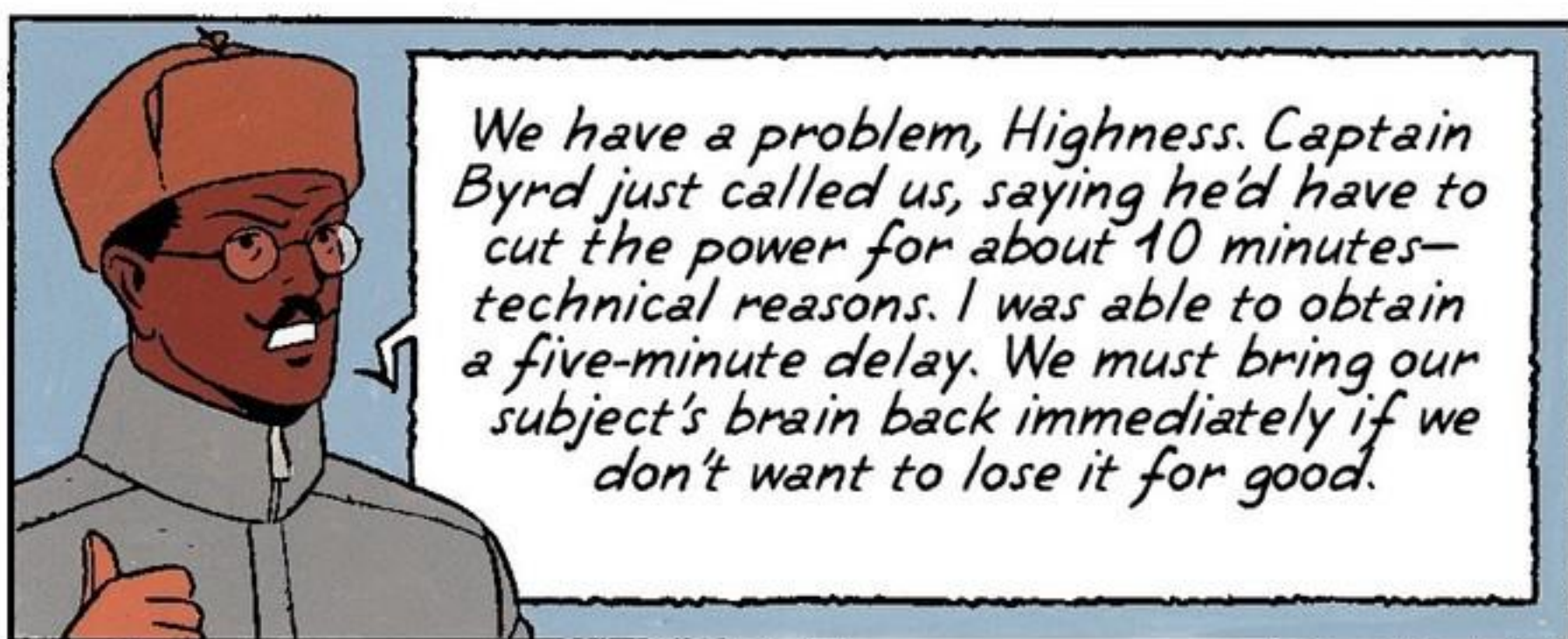
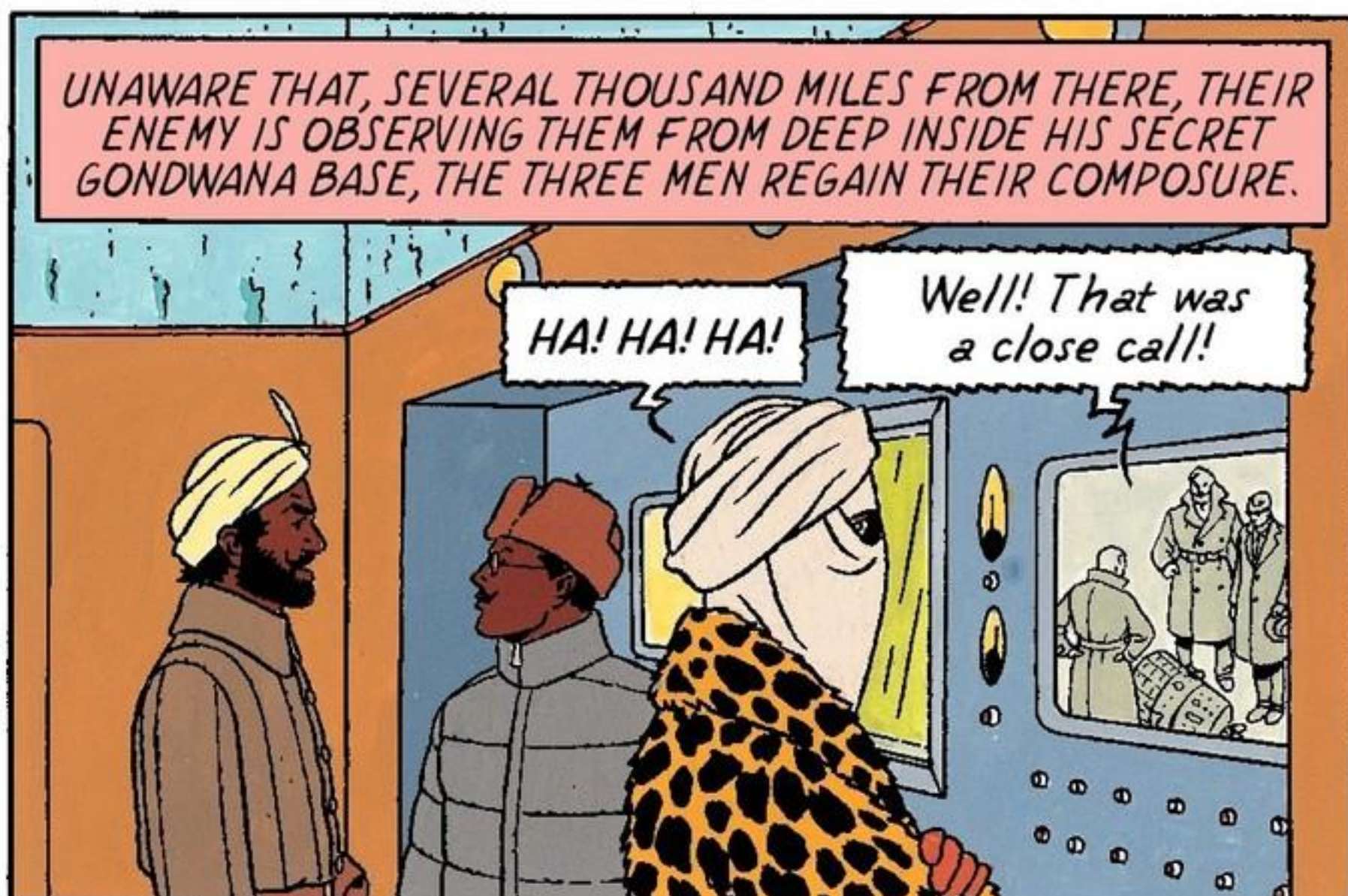
FOLLOWING THEIR PLAN, THE TWO FRIENDS AVOID THE LIONESS'S ATTACK BY A HAIR'S BREADTH...





*SEE THE FIRST THREE VOLUMES OF THE SERIES.







We have power again, Highness. We can restart the device, but slowly. The uranium-produced energy is almost depleted. It's high time a fresh supply arrived.

WASTING NO TIME, BLAKE AND MORTIMER COVER THE HUNDRED YARDS OR SO SEPARATING THE SOVIET AND AMERICAN PAVILIONS, AND THEY ENTER THE LATTER TO LOOK FOR SOMEONE IN CHARGE WHEN...



What a wonderful surprise to see you here! I got in last night, and I was hoping to contact you tomorrow!

Doctor Ramirez!* This is a wonderful... er... surprise, indeed. Would it be possible to speak to you in private? It's urgent.



In that case, we're only going to ask one more small effort of Colonel Olrik! A simple greeting to our common friend and then back home. Promise! HA! HA! HA!



Professor Mortimer! Captain Blake!



Of course. I'll just ask you to give me a minute to reschedule a meeting, and then I'm all yours. In the meantime, have a look around our pavilion. It's worth the visit, I assure you.

Very well. We'll wait for you around the calculators or the radars. See you in a jiffy.



HOLDING THEIR IMPATIENCE IN CHECK, THE TWO FRIENDS BEGIN THEIR VISIT OF THE PLACE.



Ah! There are the radars.



SUDDENLY, THE SCREENS BEGIN TO FLASH VIOLENTLY.



Heavens! Francis!...



BEFORE THE STUNNED AUDIENCE, TWO GIANT SCREENS COME ON AS IF BY MAGIC, AND OLRİK'S FACE APPEARS, WHILE HIS AMPLIFIED VOICE RESOUNDS THROUGHOUT THE ROOM.

Tremble, Professor Mortimer! Tremble, for I have come to seek my revenge and that of...



SUDDENLY, BOTH SCREENS SHUT OFF JUST AS THE SURROUNDING INSANITY STOPS. THE TWO FRIENDS REMAIN FROZEN IN DISBELIEF AT WHAT THEY HAVE JUST SEEN AND HEARD.

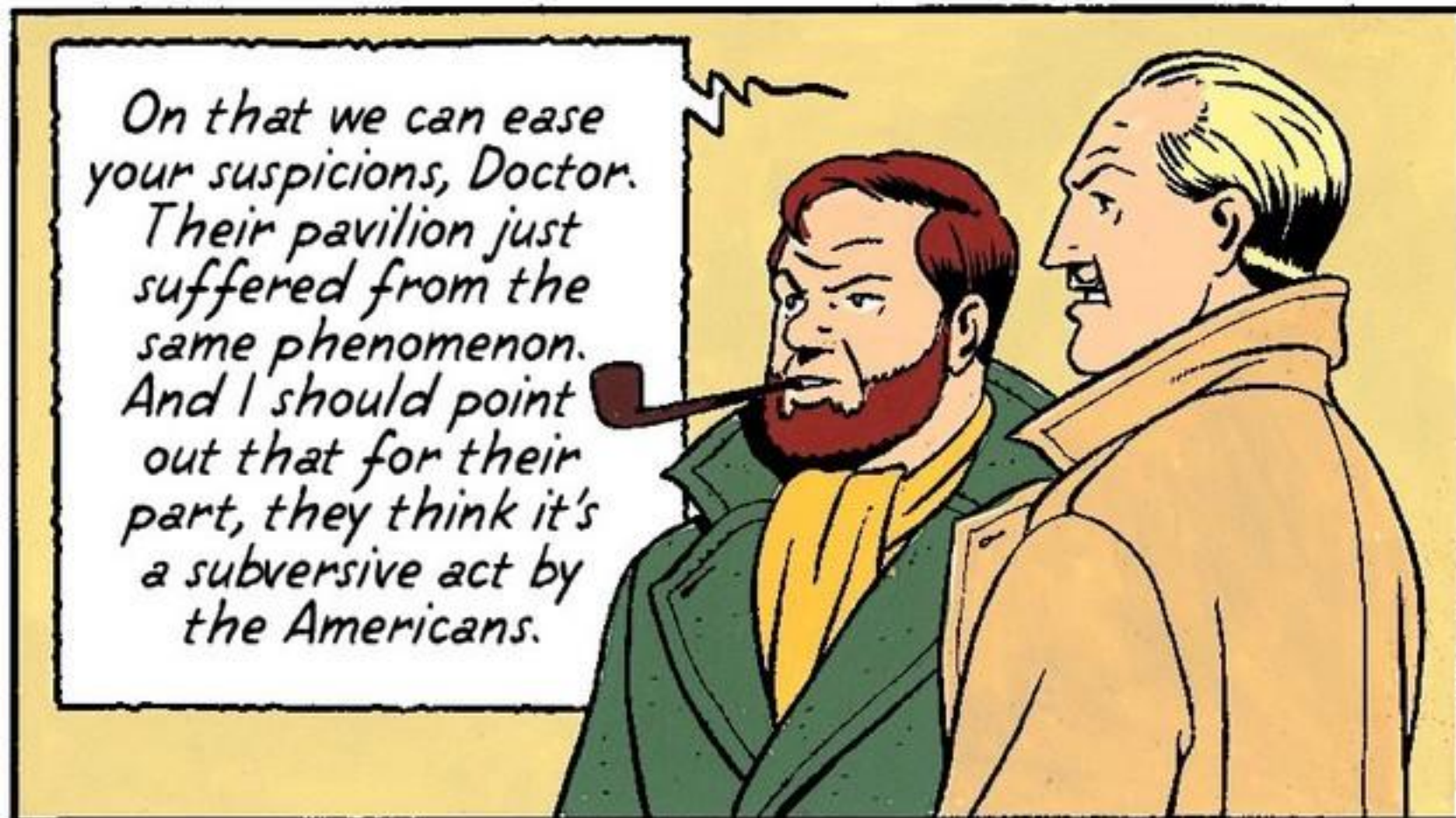
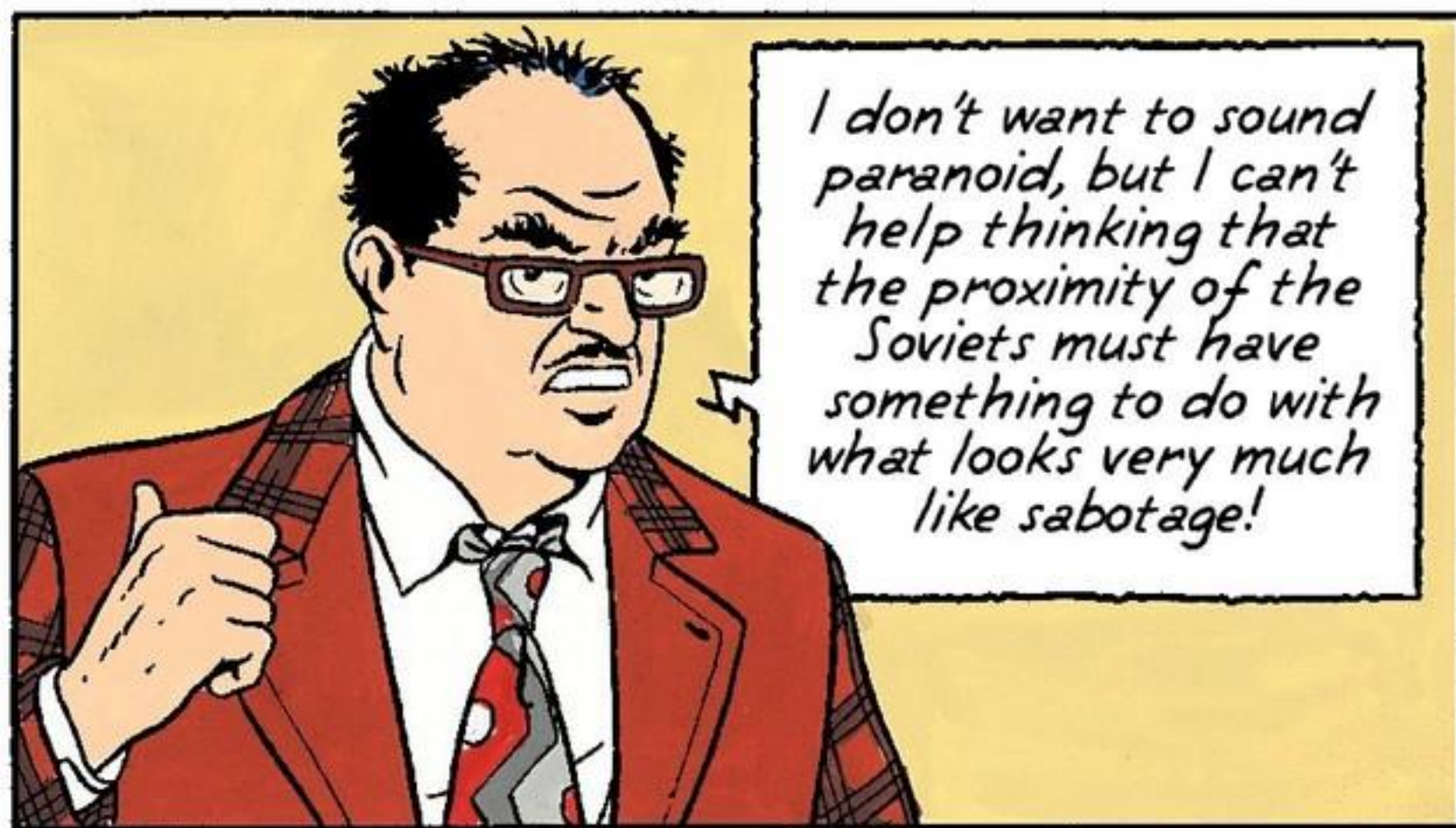
HOLY COW! What on earth just happened here?



Look!

Him?!!

*SEE THE STRANGE ENCOUNTER.



Regardless of whether there's Russian involvement, the organisers had better find who's responsible for these... these attacks quickly, before the exhibiting nations simply decide to pack up and leave!



We'd better solve this mystery quickly if we don't want to have a major international crisis on our hands.

If, on top of everything, Olrik is mixed up in all of this, we can expect the worse... Let's go back to our pavilion.



THE TWO FRIENDS DO NOT TARRY IN GETTING BACK TO THE BRITISH PAVILION, WHICH SEEMS ONCE AGAIN TO HAVE BEEN SPARED.

So, Mr Singh, is everything all right here?

There are no problems, Professor. Aside from an 11-minute interruption, this second test went as planned.



An... 11-minute interruption, did you say?!

Nothing serious, I assure you. Halley Station had to shut off its generator briefly, as it was making abnormal noises, but it was a false alarm. Everything resumed and went swimmingly until 1:00 PM, just as we'd decided.



NOT LETTING HIS SURPRISE SHOW ANY FURTHER, PROFESSOR MORTIMER TAKES LEAVE OF HIS TEAM UNDER THE PRETENCE OF ANOTHER APPOINTMENT.

In that case, gentlemen, I shall leave the write-up of this second test to you. We have to leave again. We shall be... at the Congolese Pavilion.



ALONE AT LAST, THE TWO FRIENDS SHARE THEIR COGITATIONS.

So, Philip? Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

Of course. What a coincidence it is that this severing of the radio link with Halley Station happens to correspond precisely to the time elapsed between the end of the phenomenon in the Russian pavilion and the moment it started again in the American one.



Another troubling fact: The first disasters that occurred during our second visit to the Congolese pavilion... also happened while we were conducting a test—and therefore had an active radio link with Halley...

Blimey! You're right! Not to mention that Olrik vanished from the screens at the same time that the phenomenon ended—all that just before 1:00 PM, the agreed-upon ending time for this second test. That is decidedly too much coincidence!

There's something else, Francis. Do you think it's by chance that three times in a row you and I were at the heart of the place where this phenomenon struck?...



AT THE SAME MOMENT, SOMEONE HAS TAKEN POSSESSION OF THE EMITTER IN THE BRITISH PAVILION.

Hello? Hello?... Gondwana?... Is that you, Highness?... As agreed, the supplier will hand the package over tonight, and I'll fly to Durban right away... After that, I'll board the Ravi Kuta...

... That's right... You can count on me, Highness...

AS PER THE PLAN, NASIR HAS REMAINED BEHIND INSIDE THE BRITISH PAVILION IN ORDER TO TRY AND IDENTIFY THE SPY SENT BY THE SOVIETS. HIS IDEA OF HIDING DURING THE LUNCH HOUR PROVES EXCELLENT, FOR THIS IS HOW THE INDIAN AGENT OVERHEARS THE ONE WHO'S TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HIS COLLEAGUES' ABSENCE TO CONTACT HIS SUPERIORS.



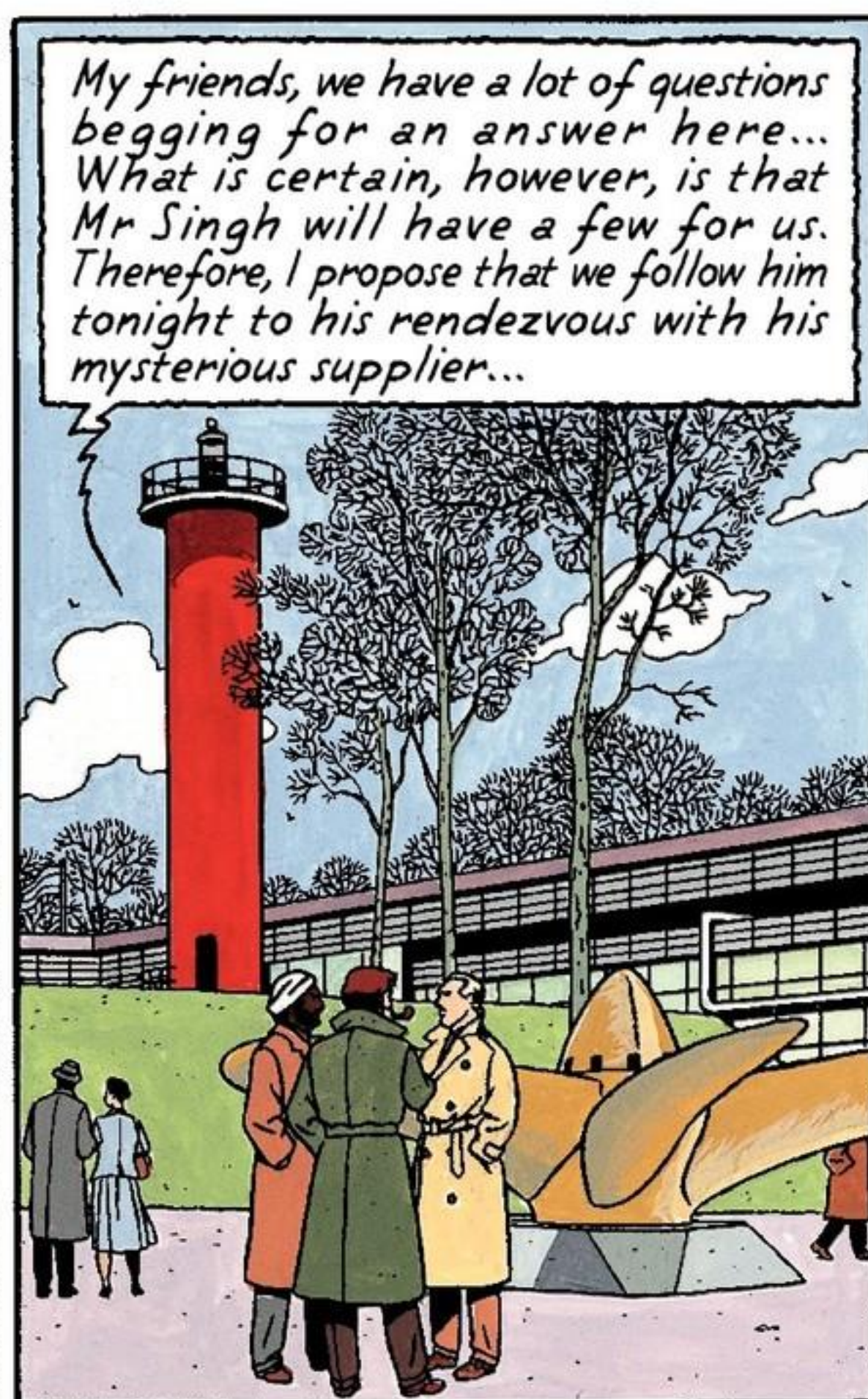
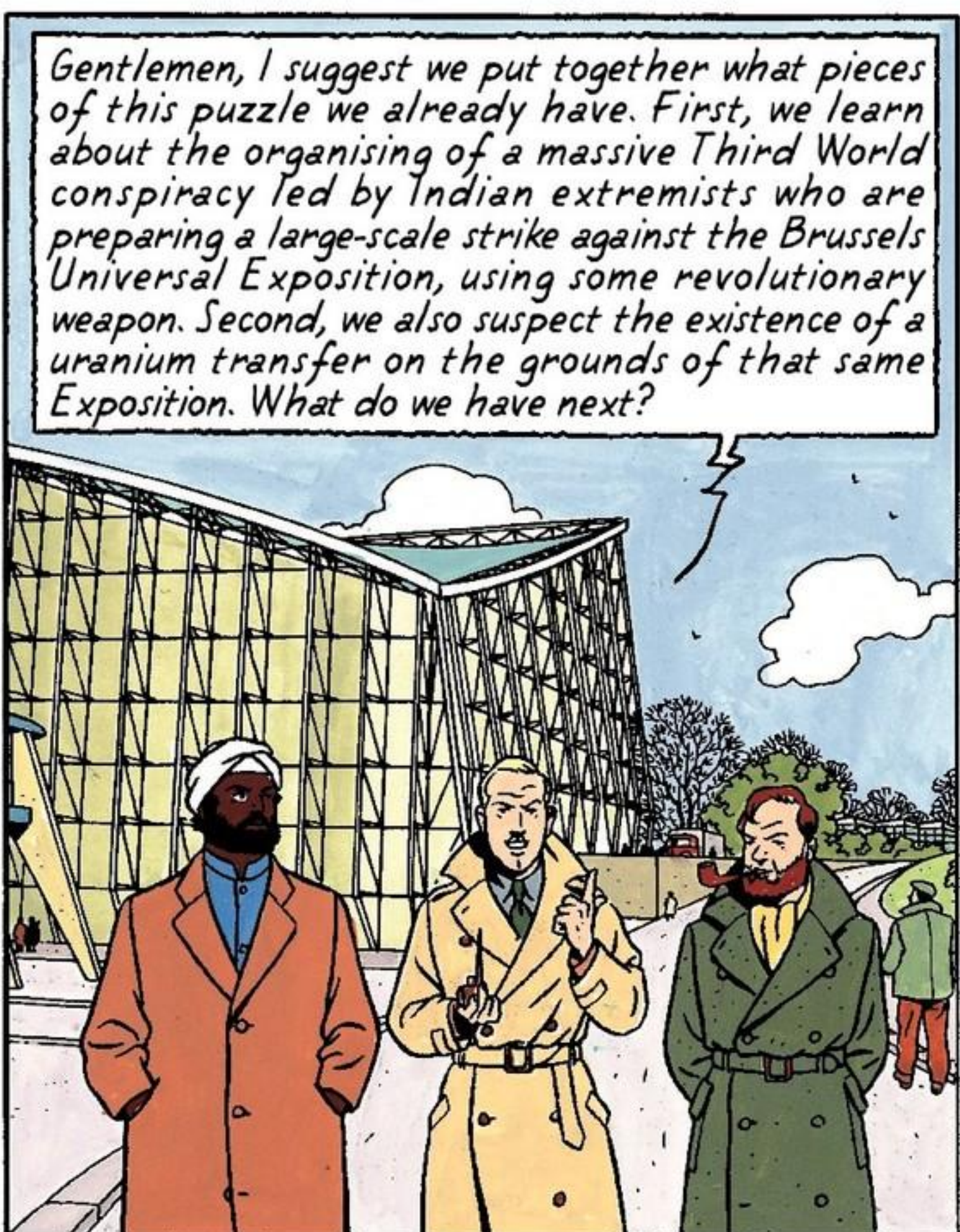
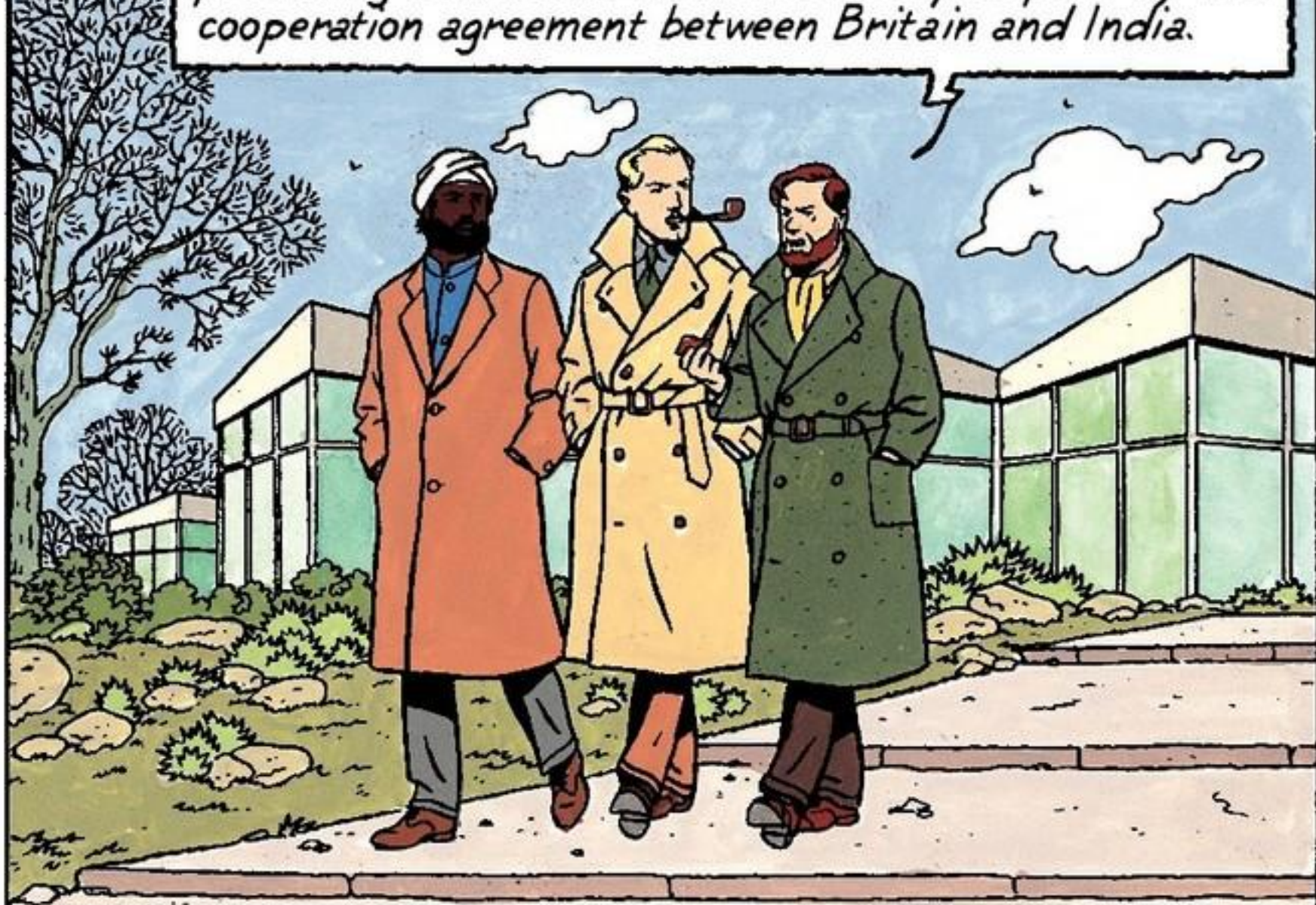
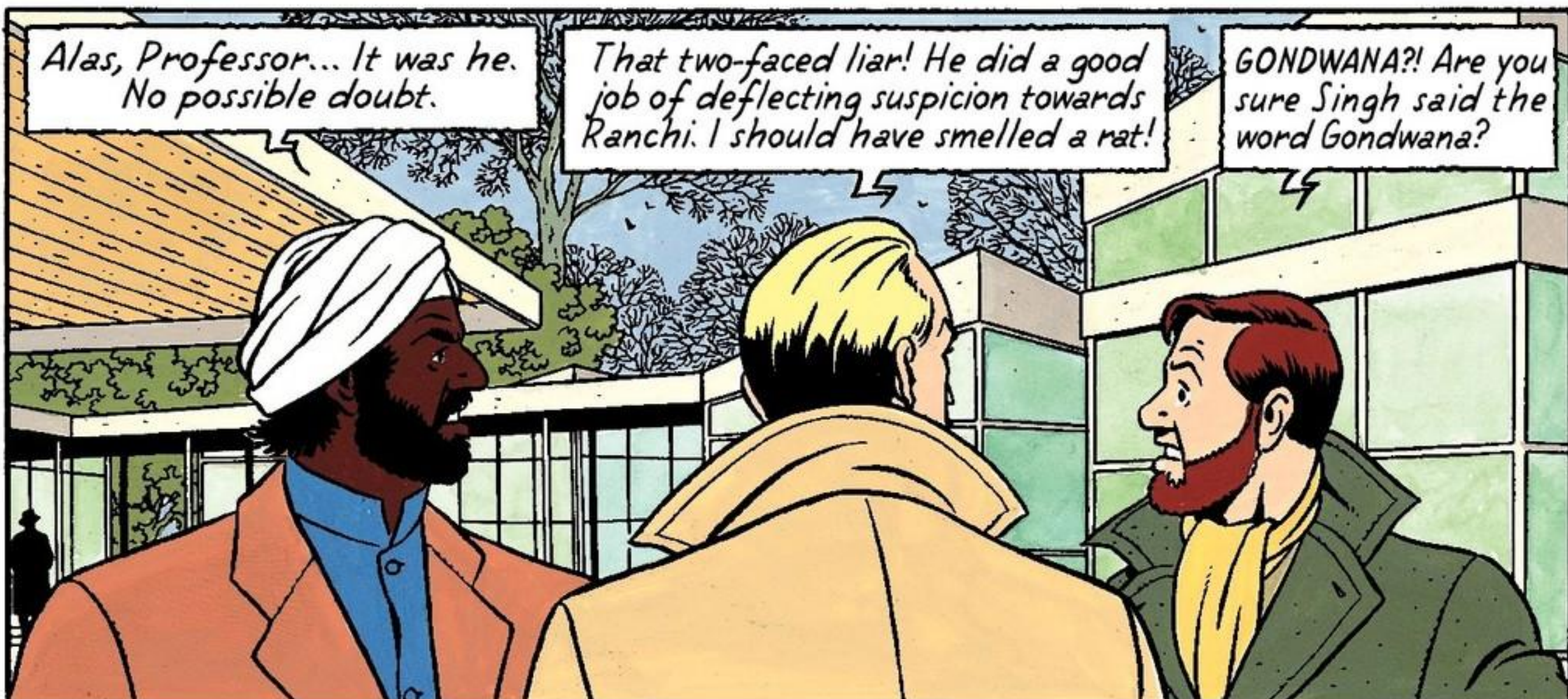
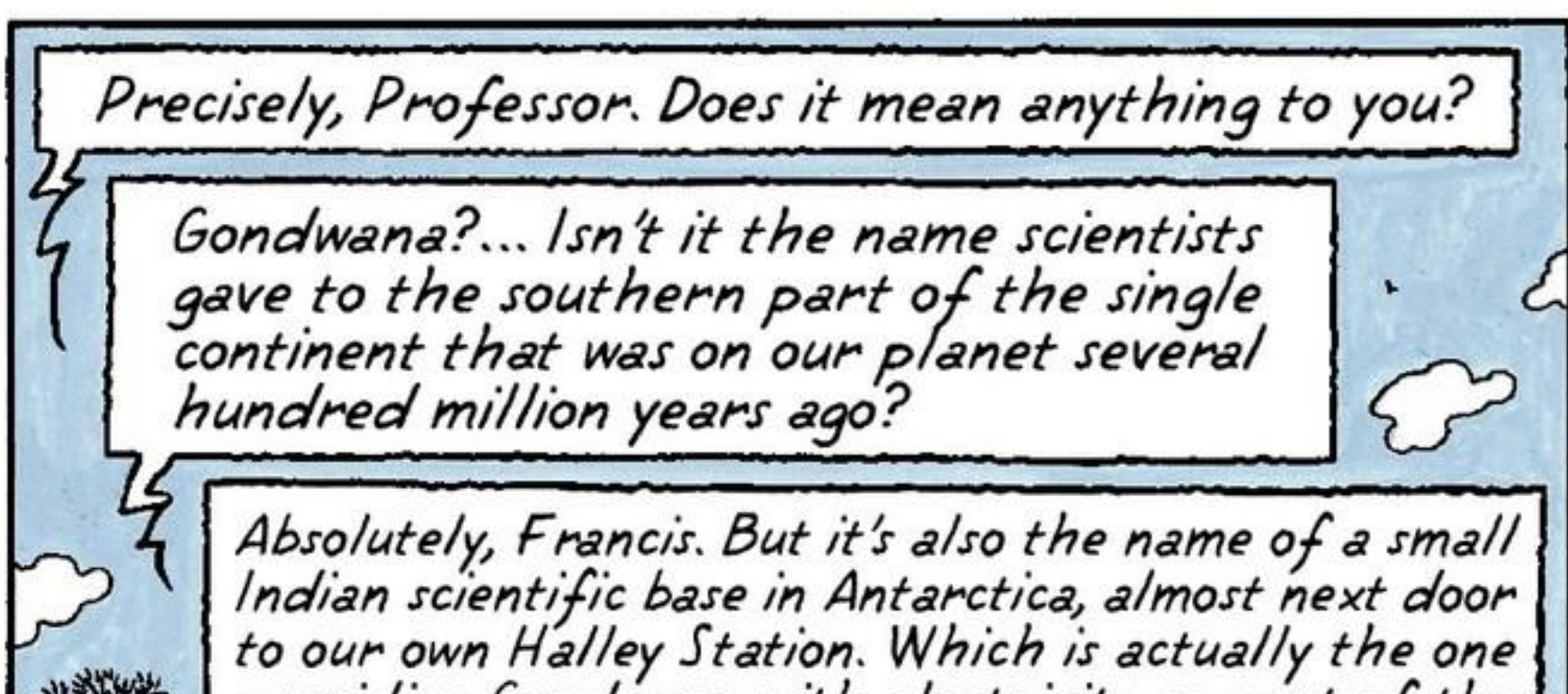
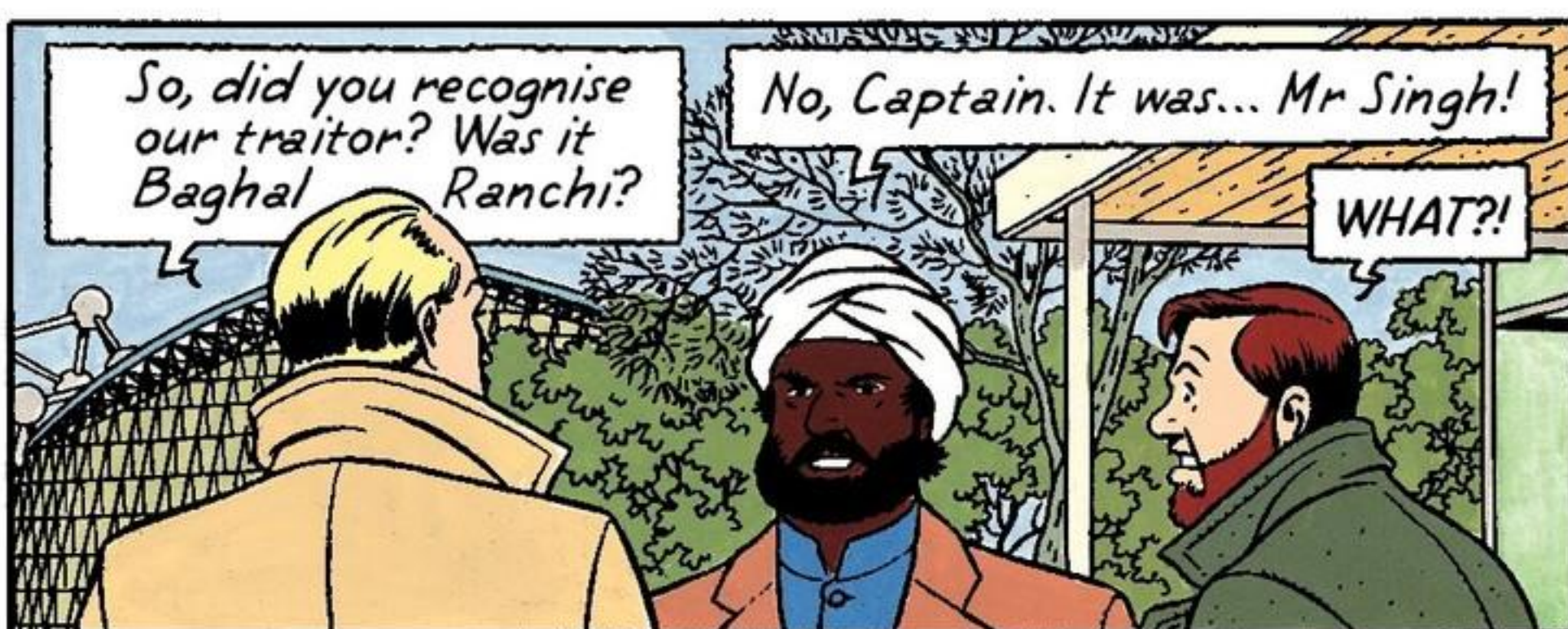
AS THE RUSSIAN SPY PREPARES TO LEAVE THE LABORATORY, THE FORMER MAKHRAN LEVY CORPS SOLDIER RISKS A GLANCE FROM THE CLOSET WHERE HE IS HIDING.

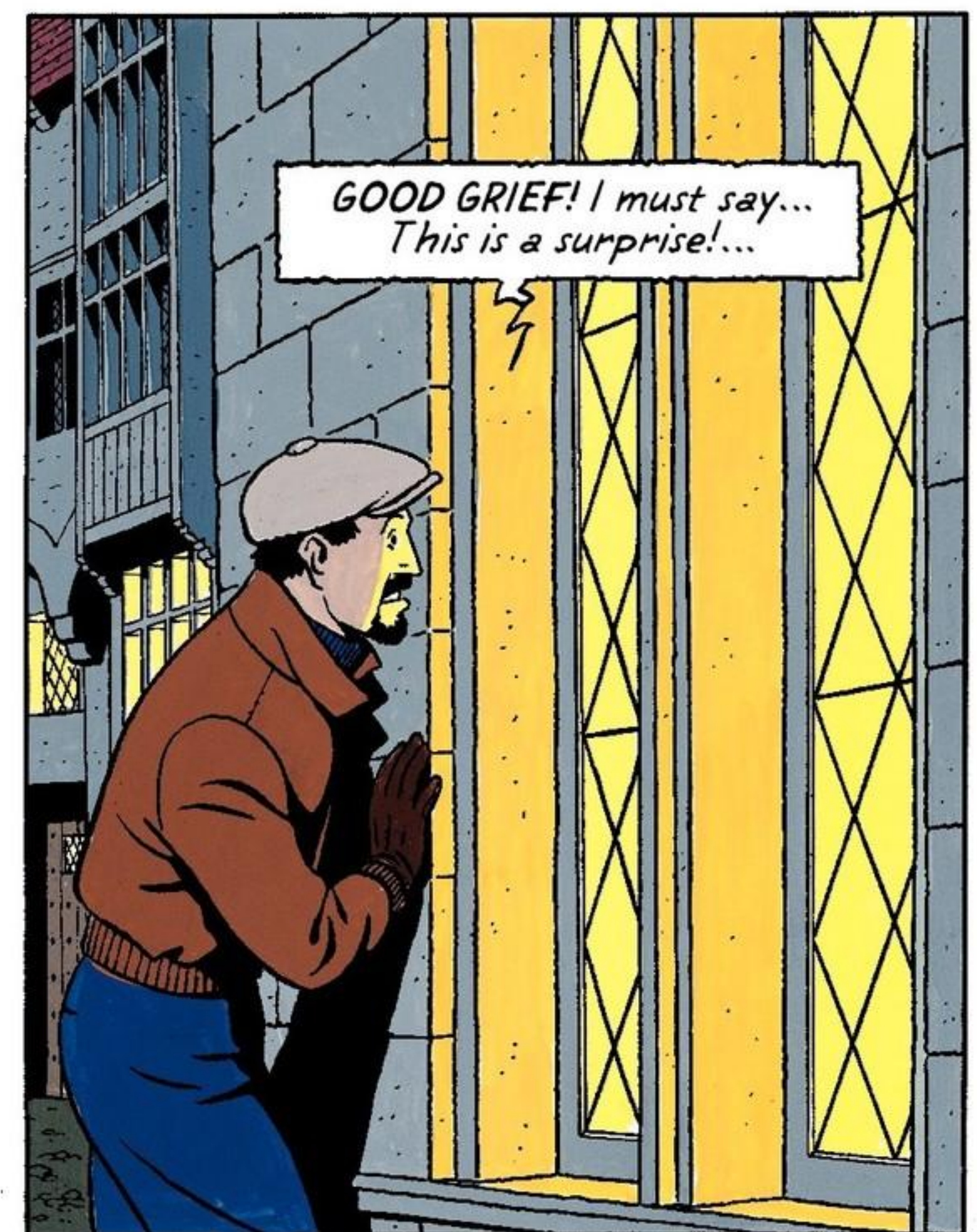
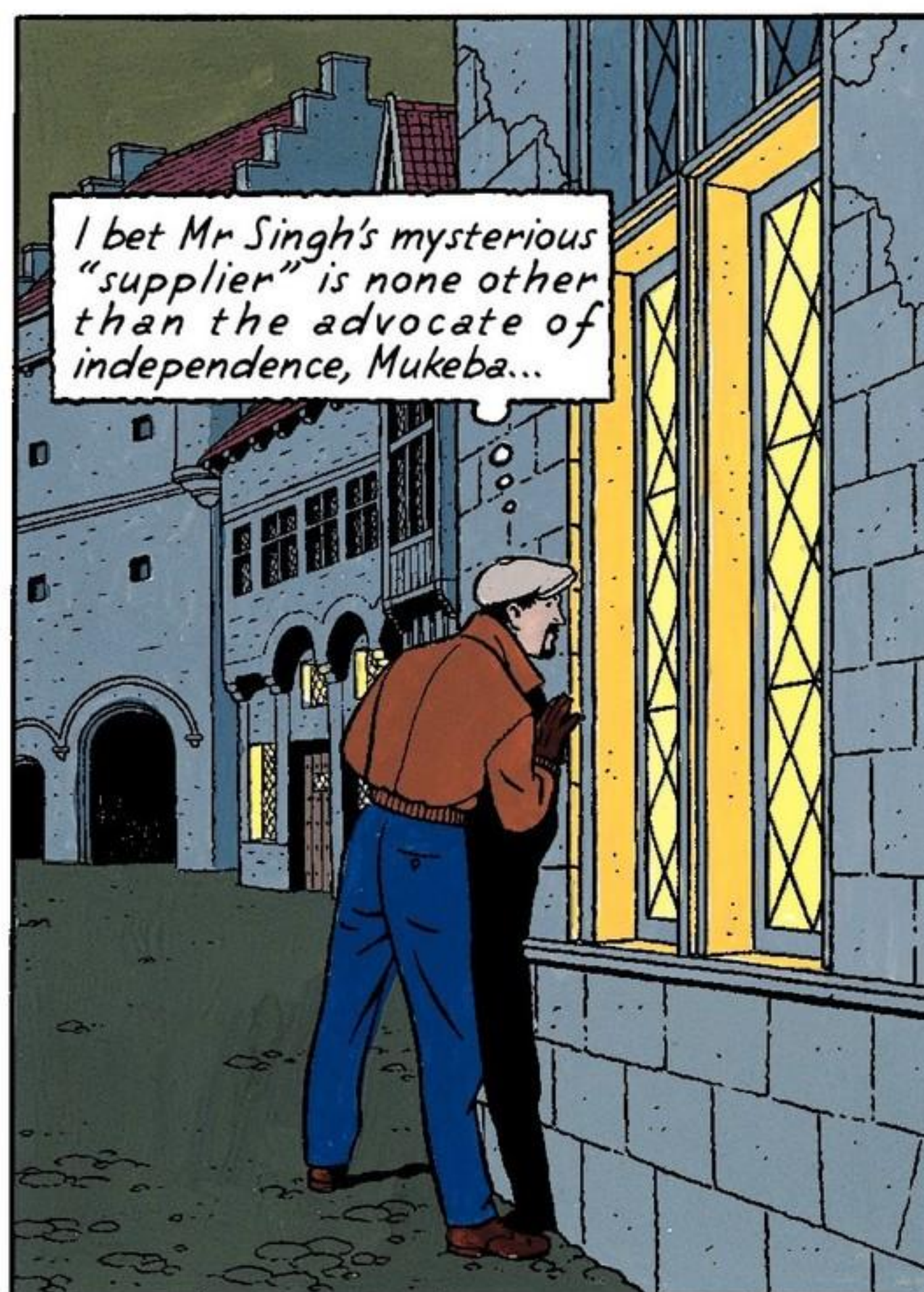
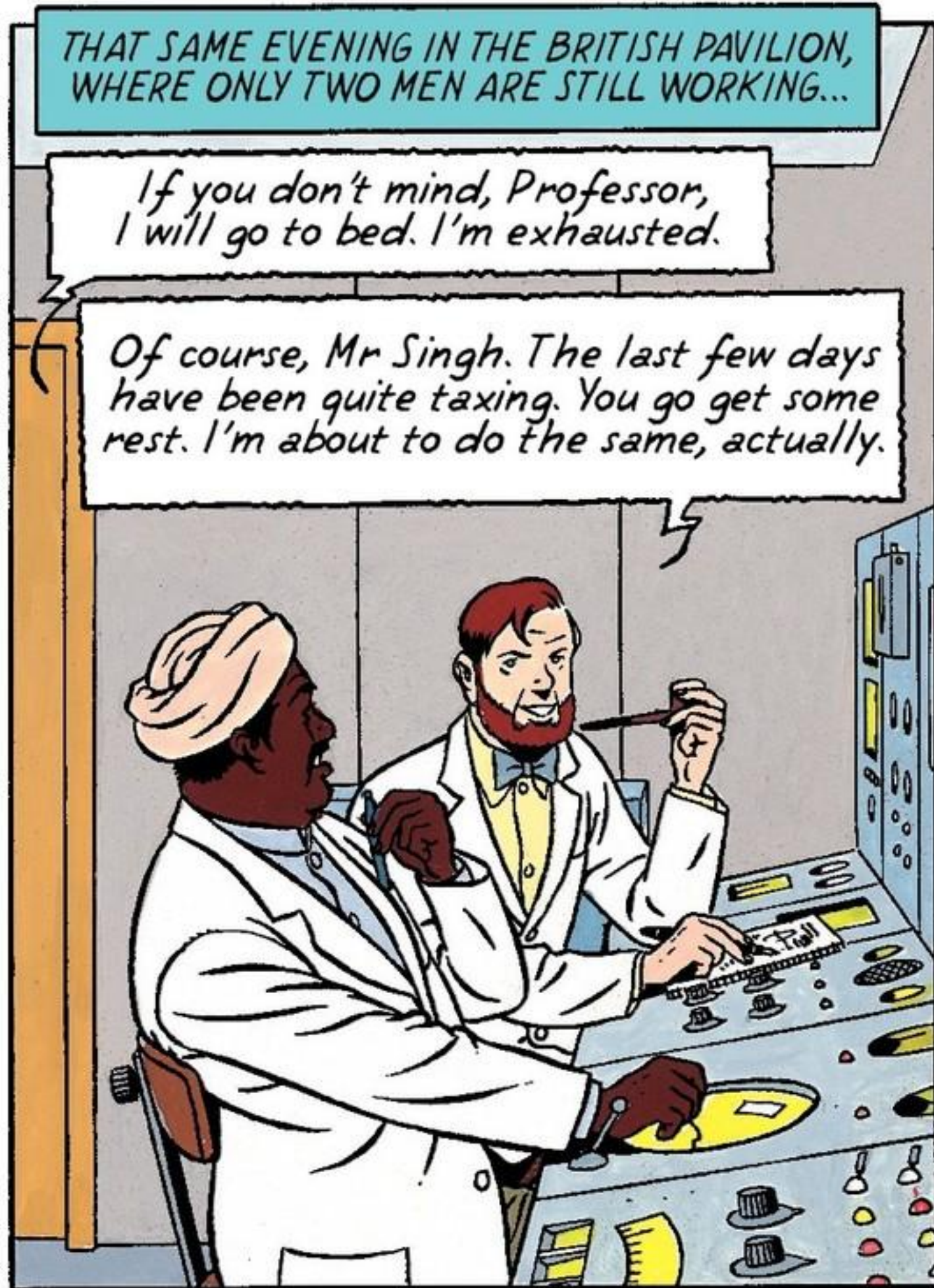


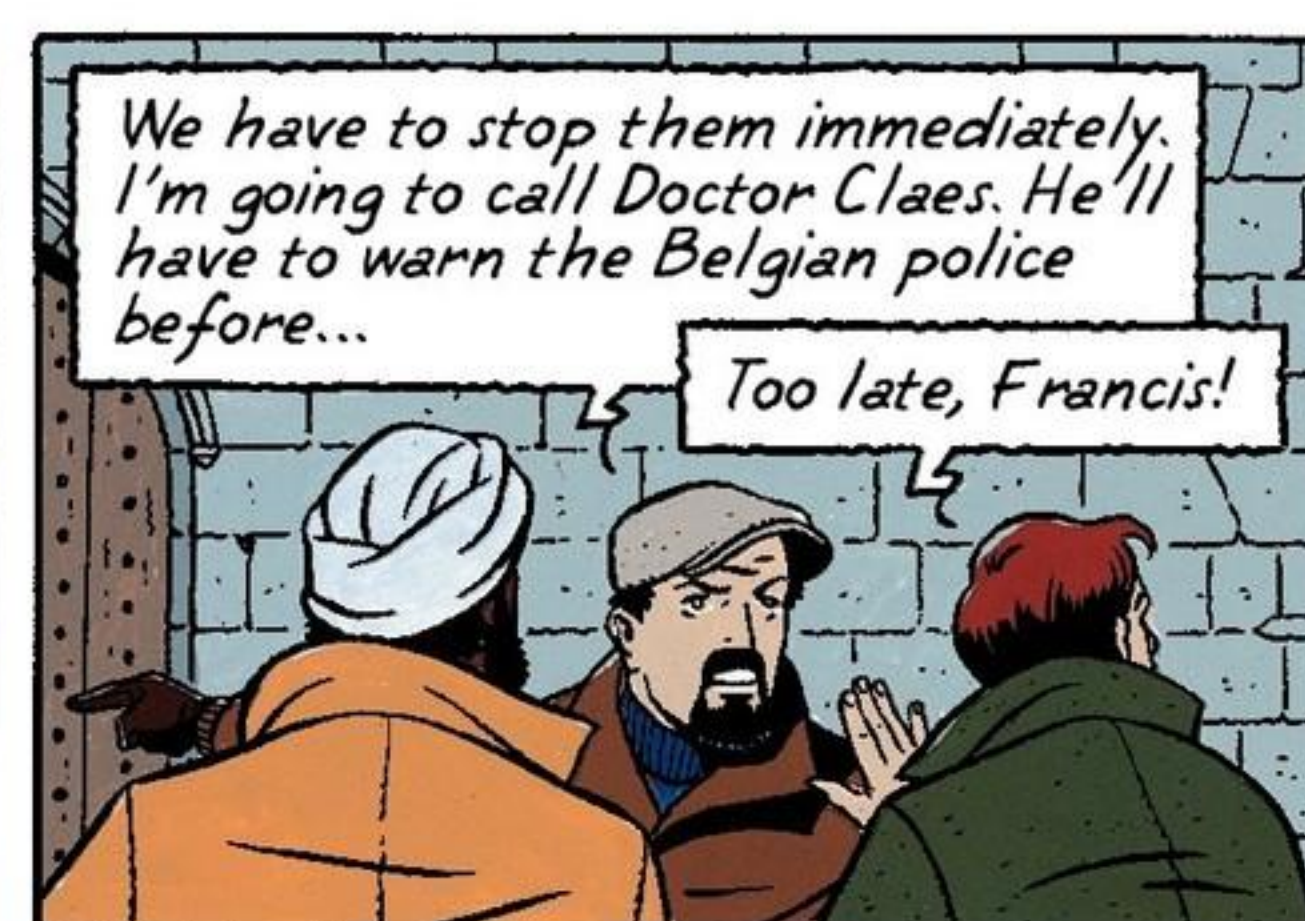
WITHOUT WASTING A MOMENT, HE EXITS THE BRITISH PAVILION AS WELL AND RUNS OFF IN SEARCH OF BLAKE AND MORTIMER...

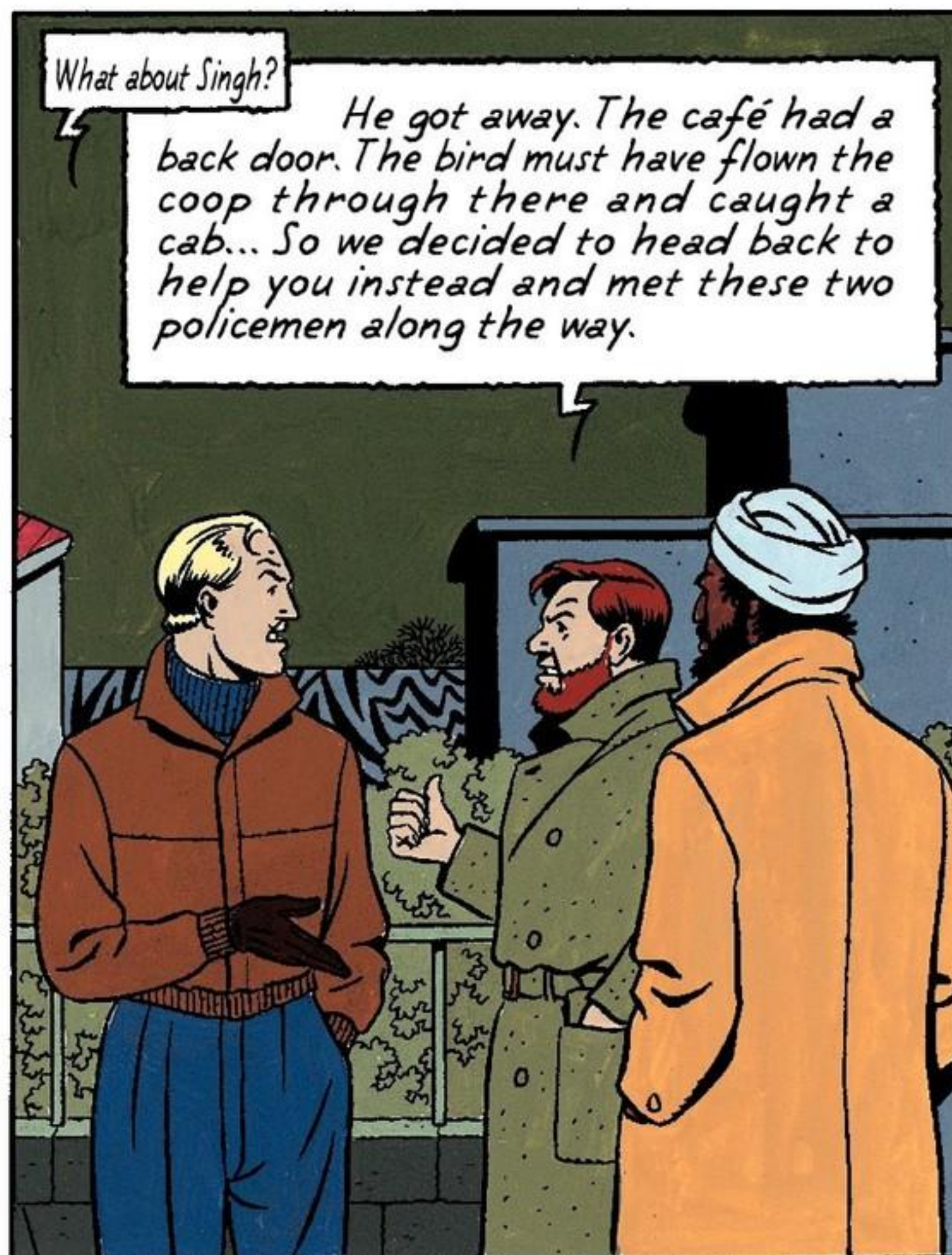
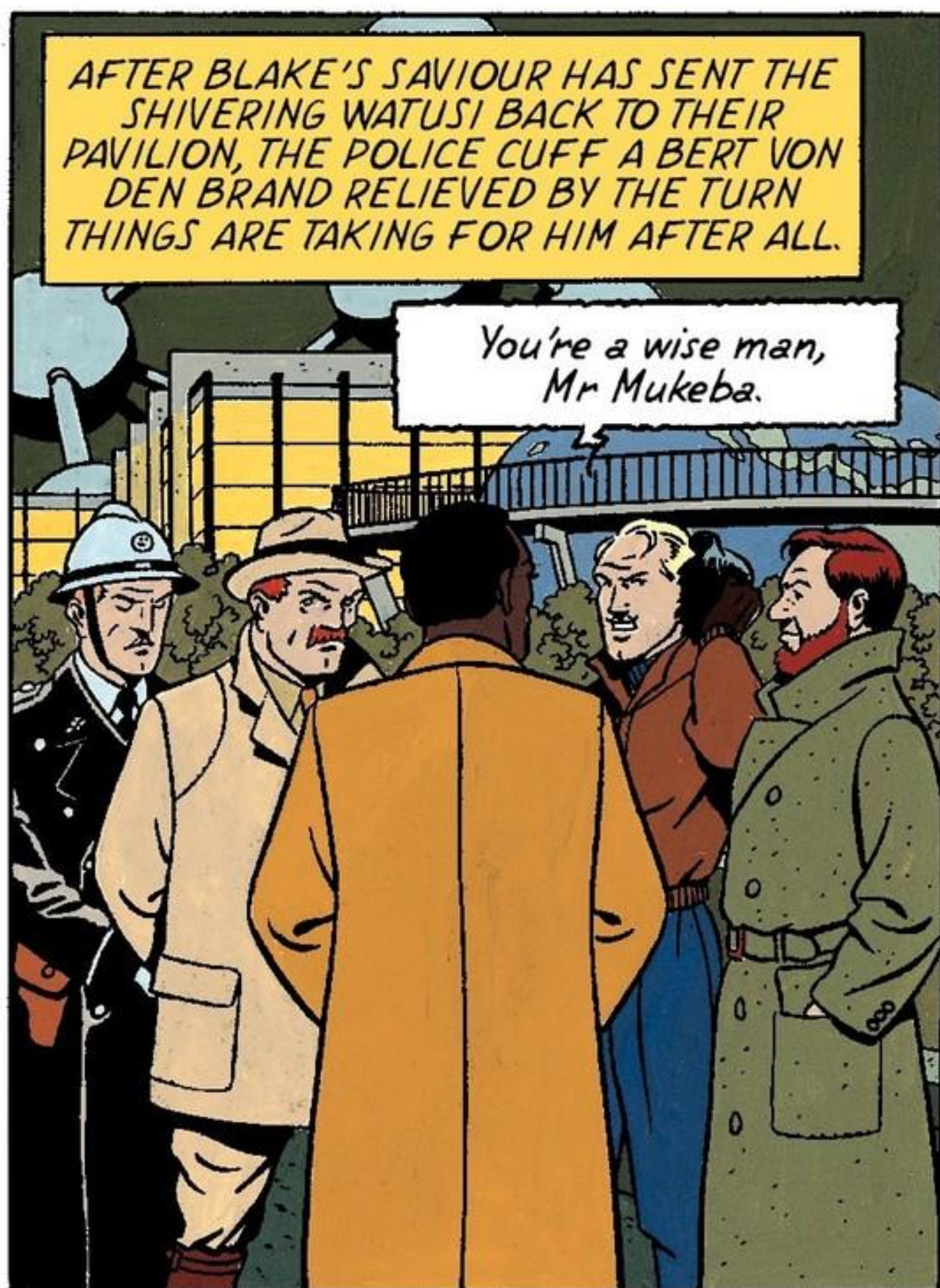


... WHOM HE FINDS DEEP IN CONVERSATION BY THE SWISS PAVILION.



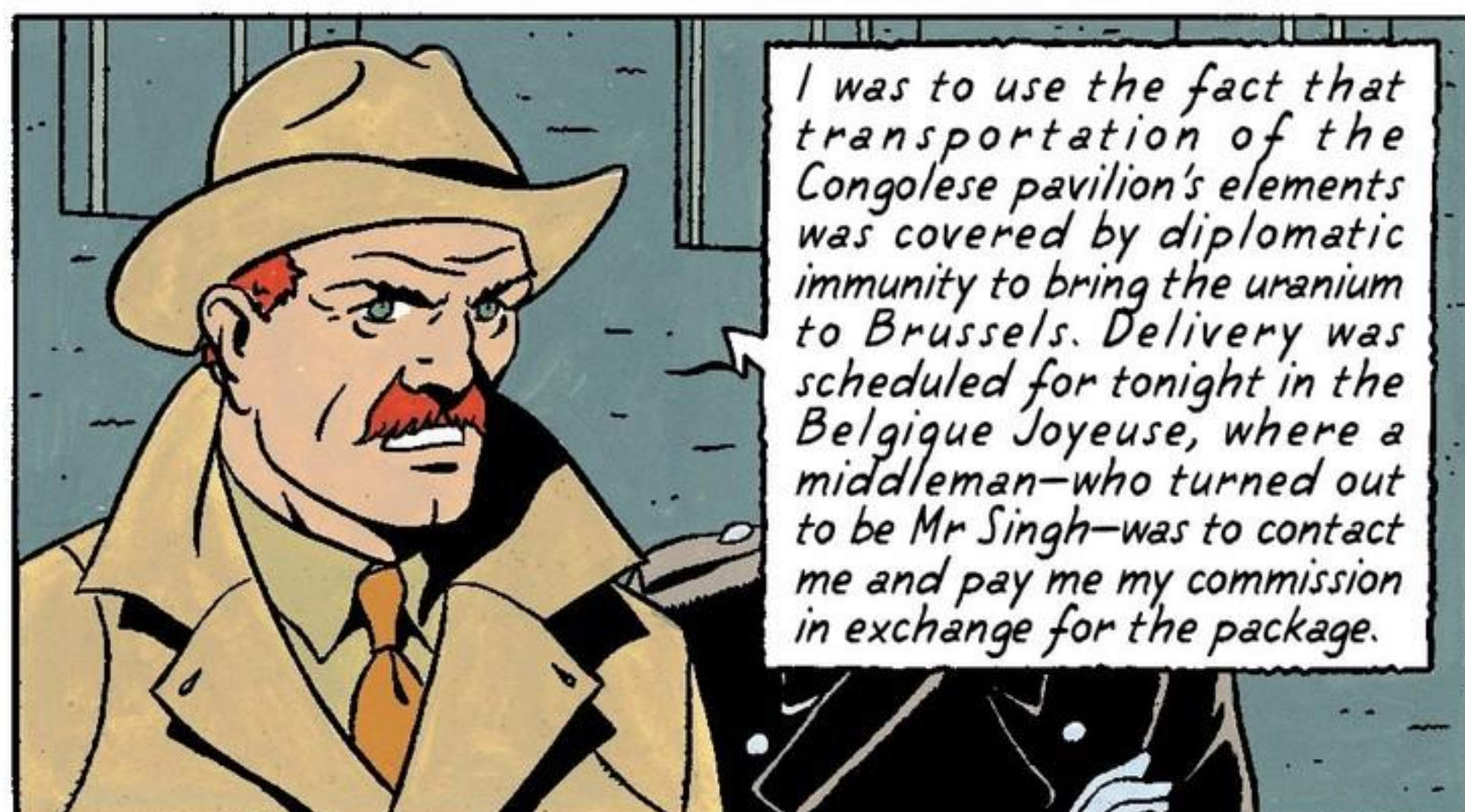








It's true... I delivered uranium to Singh. I'd stolen it in the Congo. It was an order from a client I never saw who paid me a large advance via a poste restante...



I was to use the fact that transportation of the Congolese pavilion's elements was covered by diplomatic immunity to bring the uranium to Brussels. Delivery was scheduled for tonight in the Belgique Joyeuse, where a middleman—who turned out to be Mr Singh—was to contact me and pay me my commission in exchange for the package.

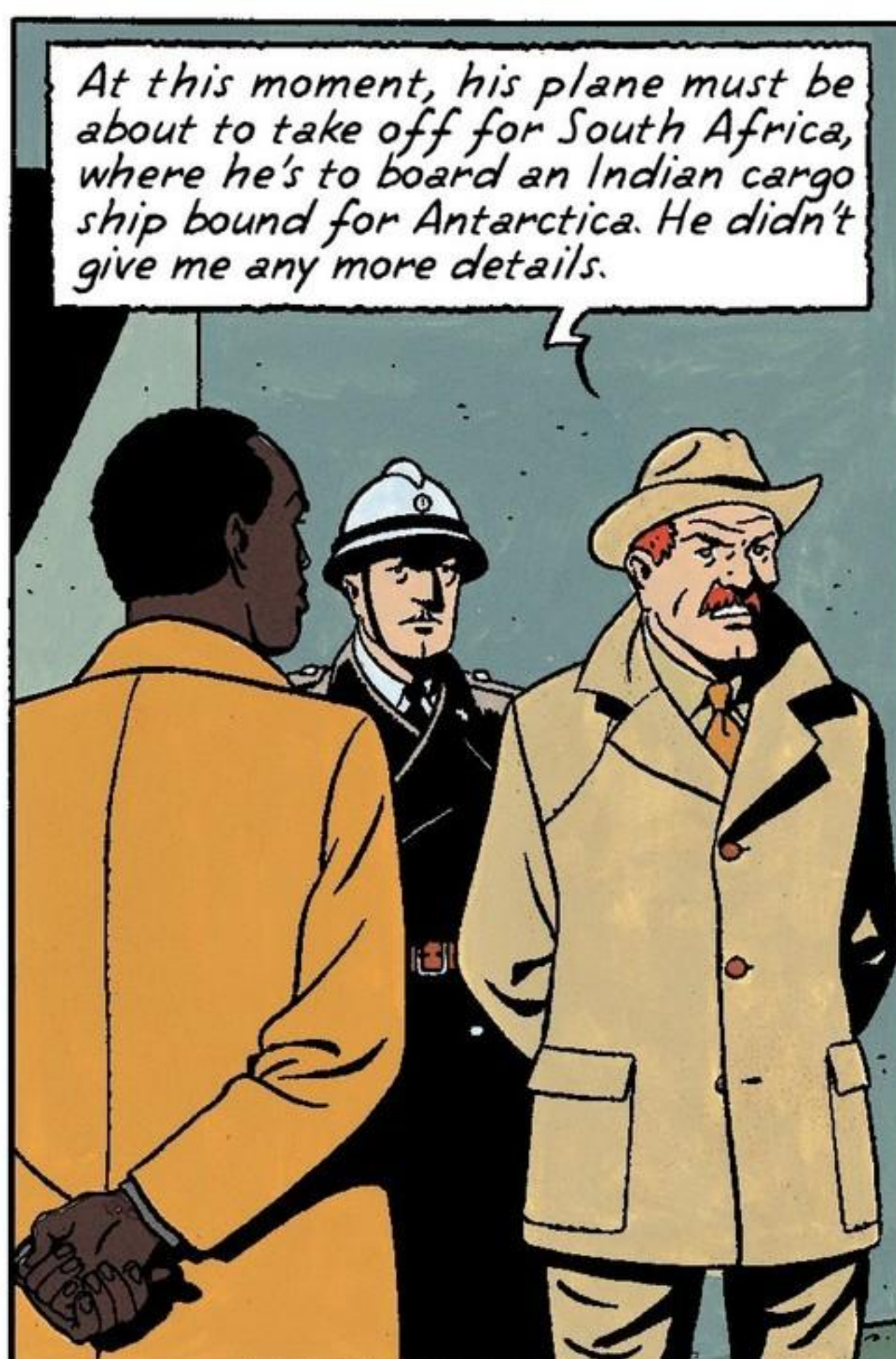


This uranium... What was it for?



All I know is that it's supposed to provide the energy for a new kind of weapon. I swear I don't know anything else.

And where is Singh supposed to deliver this uranium?



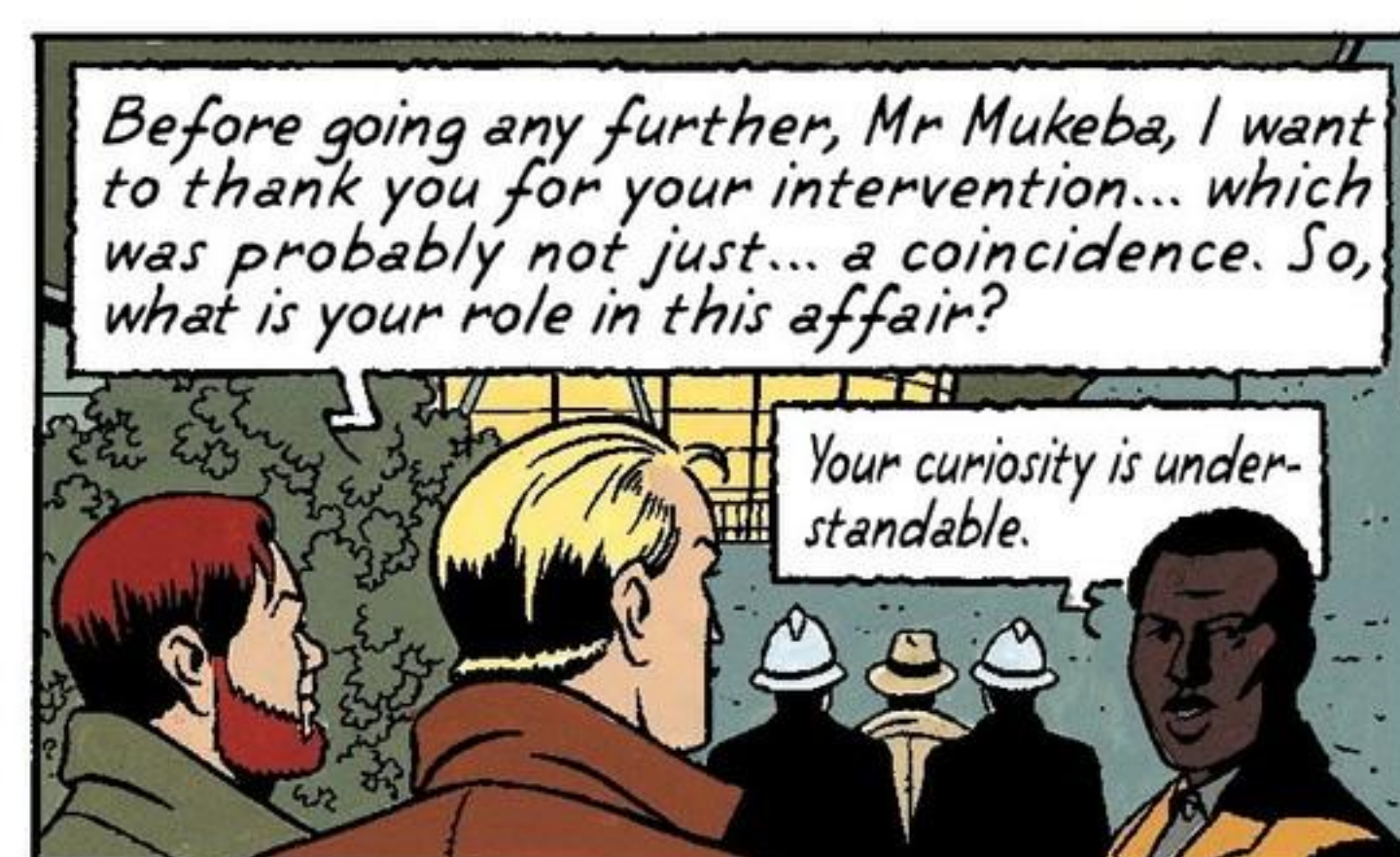
At this moment, his plane must be about to take off for South Africa, where he's to board an Indian cargo ship bound for Antarctica. He didn't give me any more details.



It fits! That cargo ship must be the Kavi Kuta that Singh mentioned in his last radio transmission!

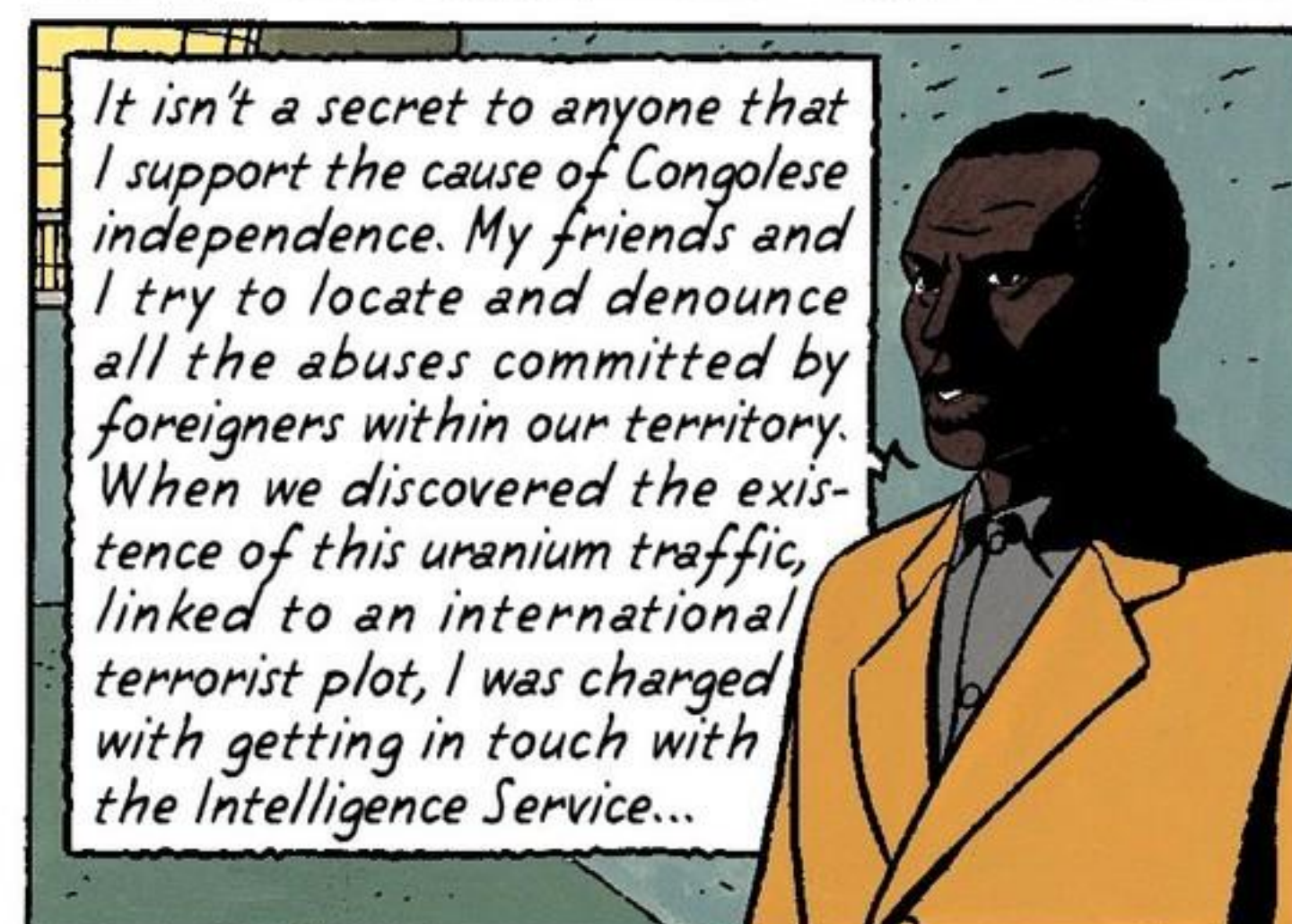


Well! I'd say this individual did, indeed, tell us everything he knows. He's all yours, gentlemen!

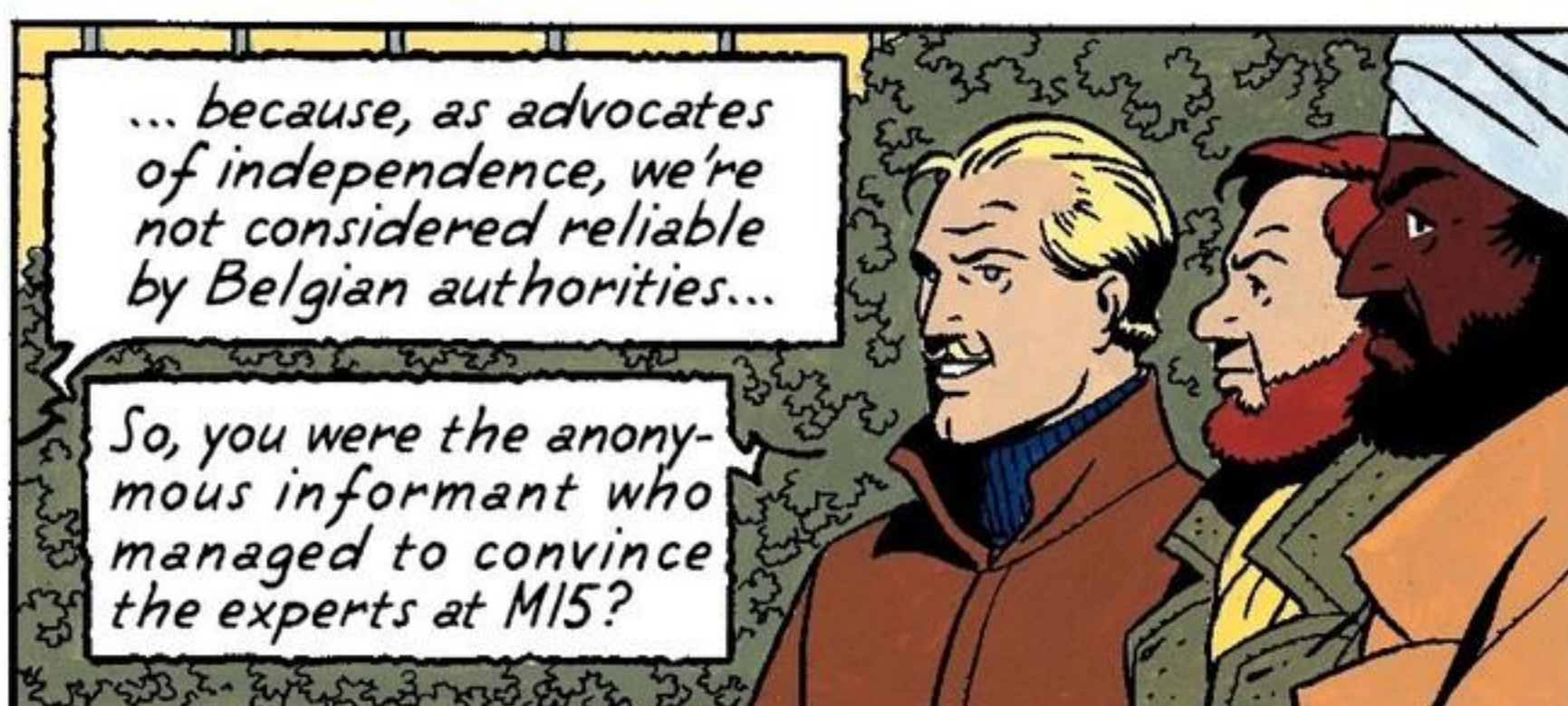


Before going any further, Mr Mukeba, I want to thank you for your intervention... which was probably not just... a coincidence. So, what is your role in this affair?

Your curiosity is understandable.



It isn't a secret to anyone that I support the cause of Congolese independence. My friends and I try to locate and denounce all the abuses committed by foreigners within our territory. When we discovered the existence of this uranium traffic, linked to an international terrorist plot, I was charged with getting in touch with the Intelligence Service...

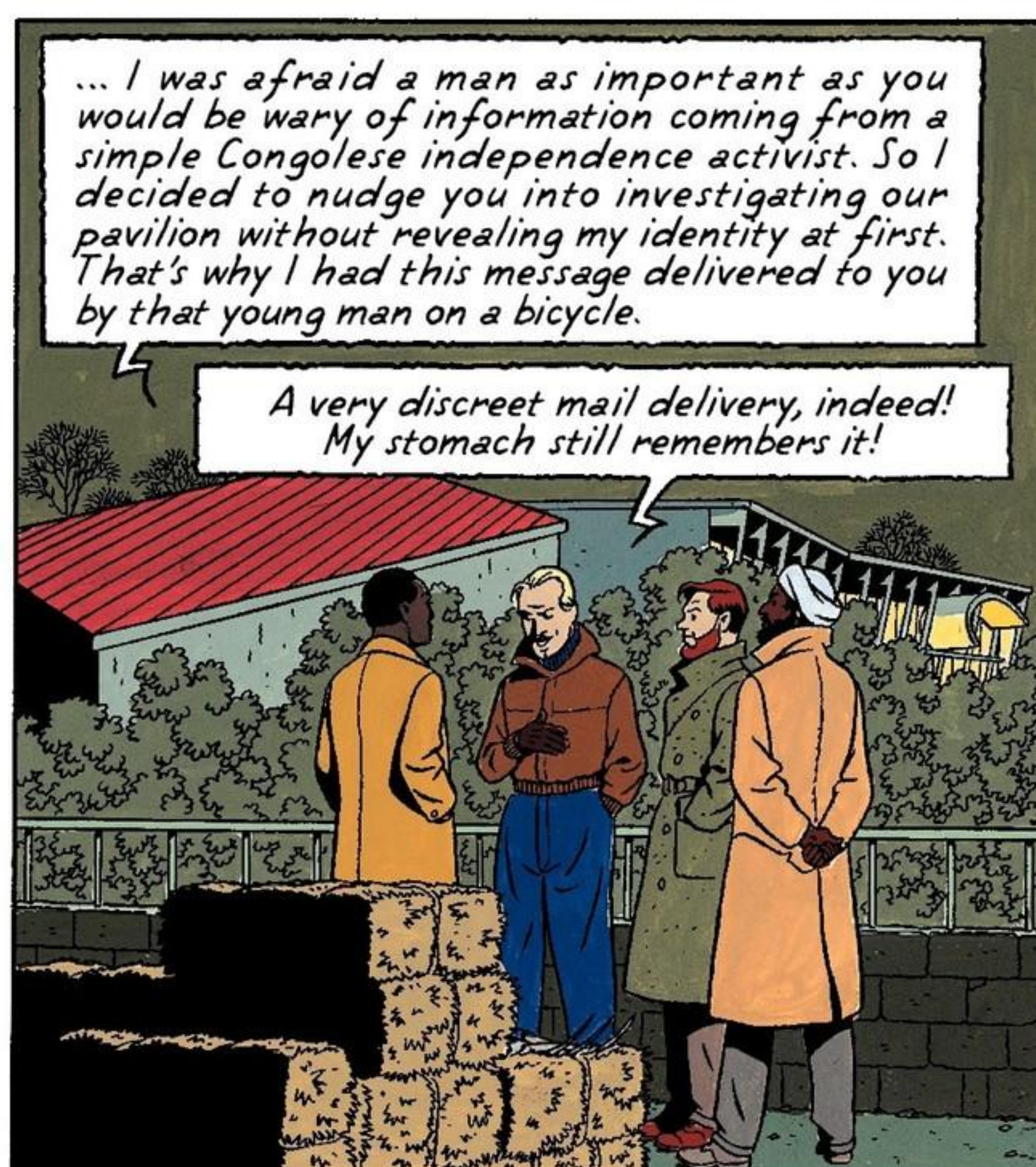


... because, as advocates of independence, we're not considered reliable by Belgian authorities...

So, you were the anonymous informant who managed to convince the experts at M15?



It was I, yes. Despite my suspicions regarding Van den Brand, I had no proof that he had uranium in his possession. So I got myself hired into the Congolese pavilion's team to be able to follow him to Brussels... and discovered that he was keeping a suspiciously close eye on a certain package...

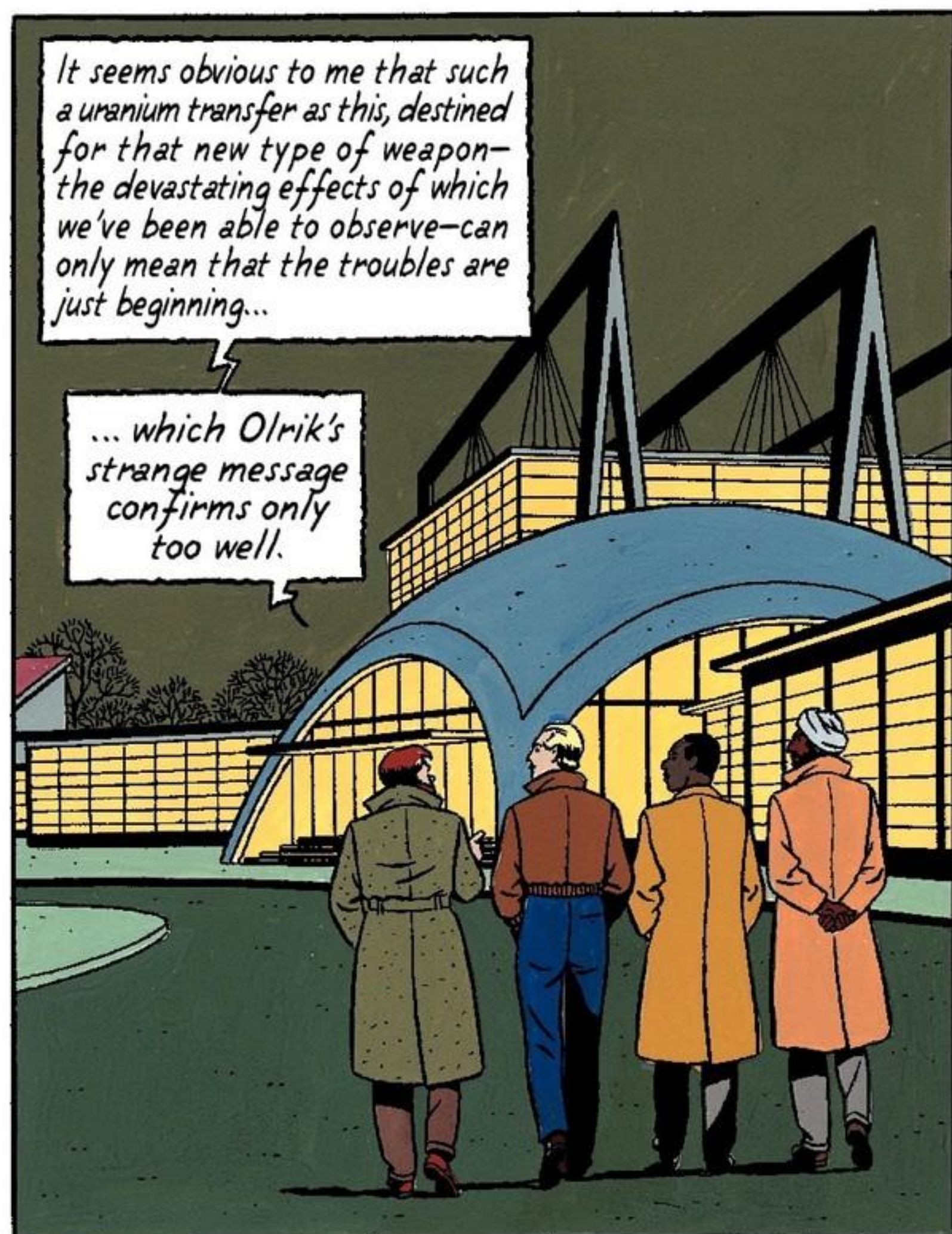


... I was afraid a man as important as you would be wary of information coming from a simple Congolese independence activist. So I decided to nudge you into investigating our pavilion without revealing my identity at first. That's why I had this message delivered to you by that young man on a bicycle.

A very discreet mail delivery, indeed! My stomach still remembers it!



Well, gentlemen, now that we have all the information, it's time to make some decisions. And quickly!



It seems obvious to me that such a uranium transfer as this, destined for that new type of weapon—the devastating effects of which we've been able to observe—can only mean that the troubles are just beginning...

... which Olrik's strange message confirms only too well.



There's only one solution: Go to Antarctica and neutralise the weapon before the Universal Exposition's official opening... and before the arrival of hundreds of thousands of visitors and potential victims!



Shouldn't we warn Halley Station?

Absolutely not! If those people are capable of triggering such catastrophes from thousands of miles away, they must be quite capable of intercepting radio messages and running away before we get there. Besides, the tests with Halley must continue during our absence.

We still have to find a way to get there quickly and discreetly...



There might be a way: Labrousse! He left for a French base in Antarctica and is scheduled to make a stop at Halley. If we were to join him in Cape Town, we might be able to embark with him...

... and, who knows, to arrive before the Ravi Kuta!

Bravo, Philip! This is a brilliant idea!



Then we will warn Doctor Claes this very night. Before that, I have to find Miss Jones, Liver and Ranchi to organise the rest of the tests.



As for me, I'll take care of the paperwork and plane tickets right away.



Well, gentlemen, I guess I can only wish you good luck now!...



I regret I can only go with you in spirit.

You've already helped us very much, Mr Mukeba! Have faith in us.

AND THE NEXT AFTERNOON, THE LONG-HAUL AIRCRAFT CARRYING THE THREE MEN TAKES OFF TOWARDS SOUTH AFRICA.

WILL BLAKE, MORTIMER AND NASIR SUCCEED IN THWARTING THE HORRIFIC PLOT THAT THREATENS THE UNIVERSAL EXPOSITION?



WILL MORTIMER DEFEAT ASHOKA, THE ETERNAL EMPEROR, AND DISPEL AT LAST THE NIGHTMARES OF HIS PAST?

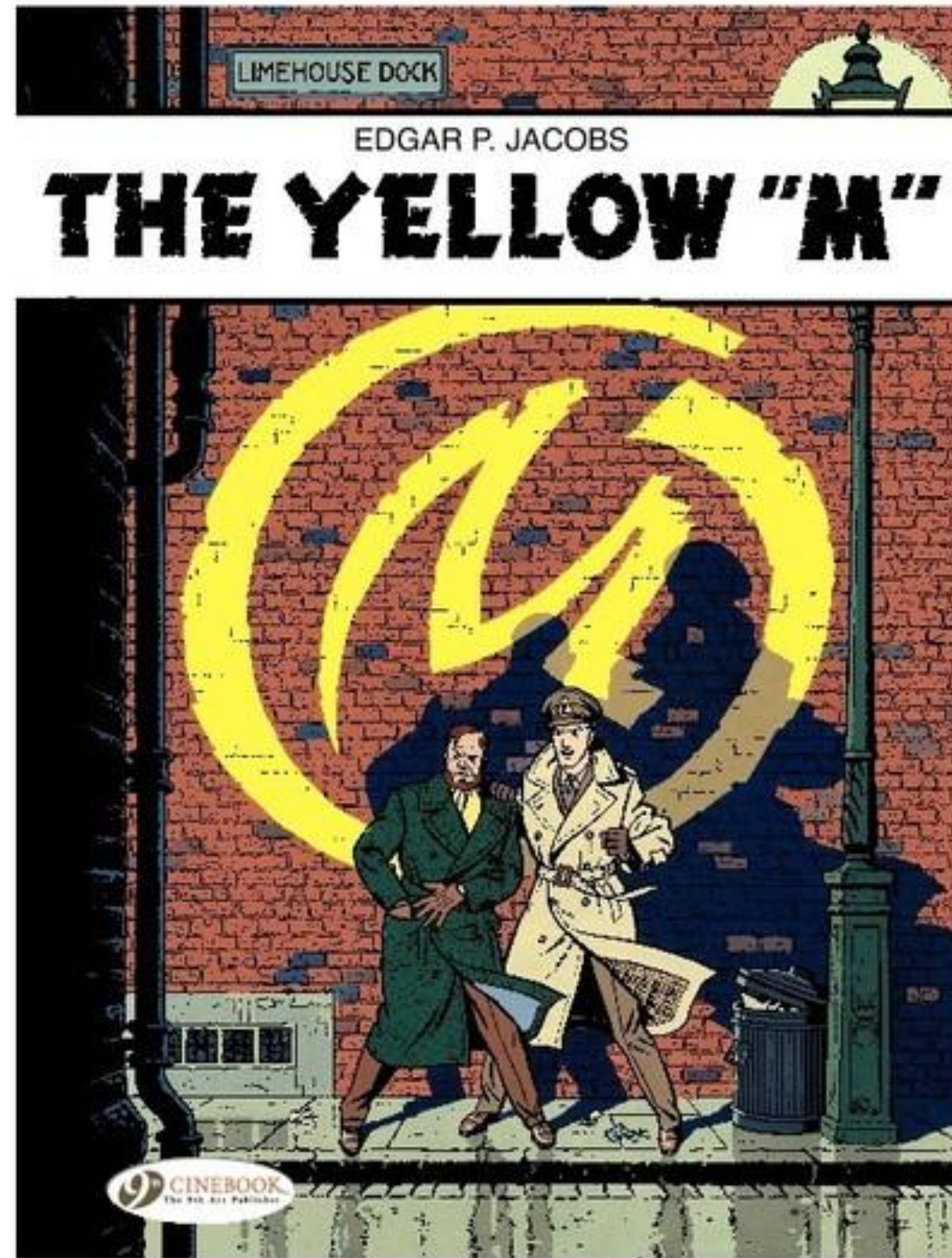


FIND OUT IN BATTLE OF THE SPIRITS, THE SECOND VOLUME OF THE SARCOPHAGI OF THE SIXTH CONTINENT.

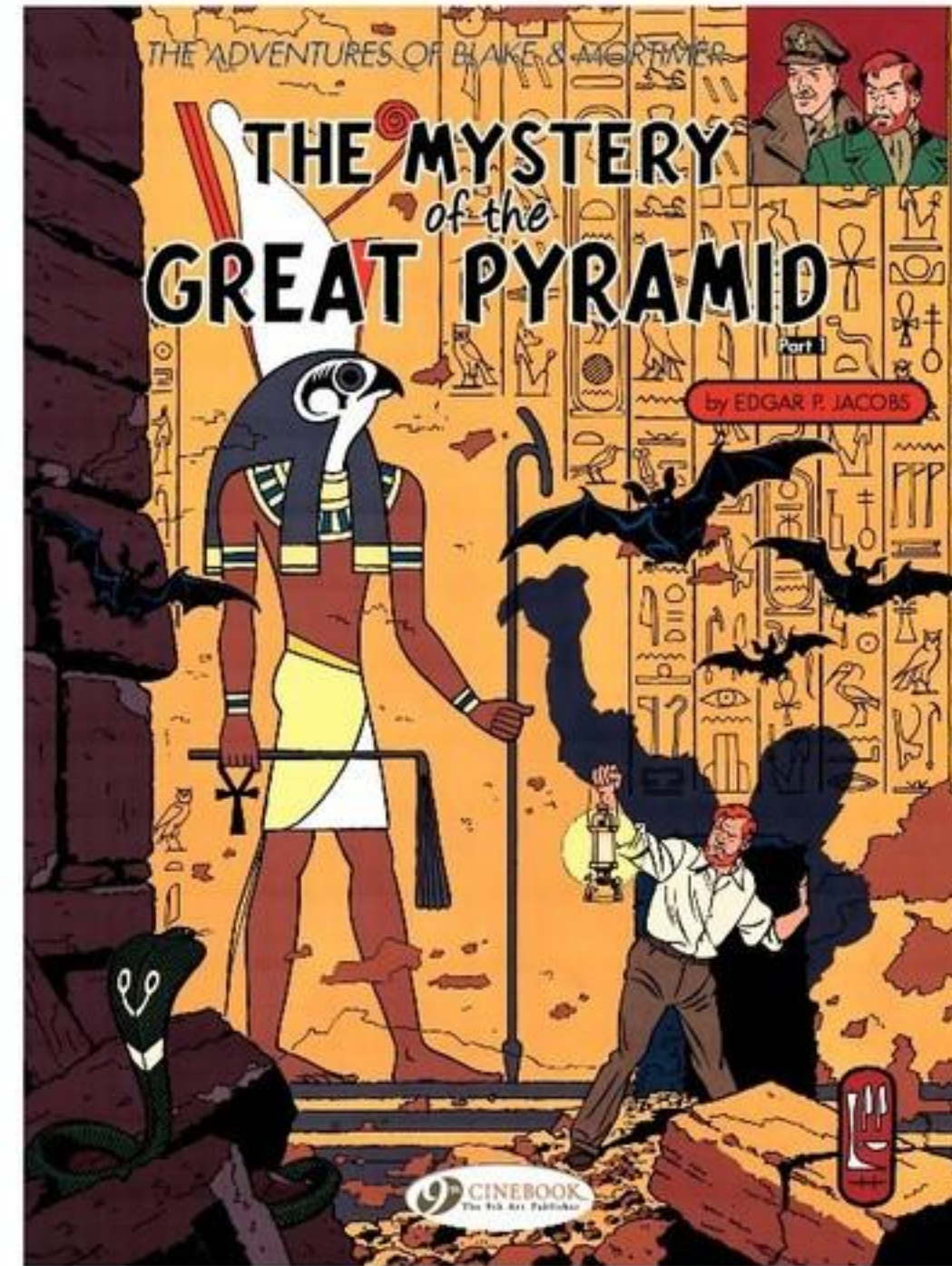




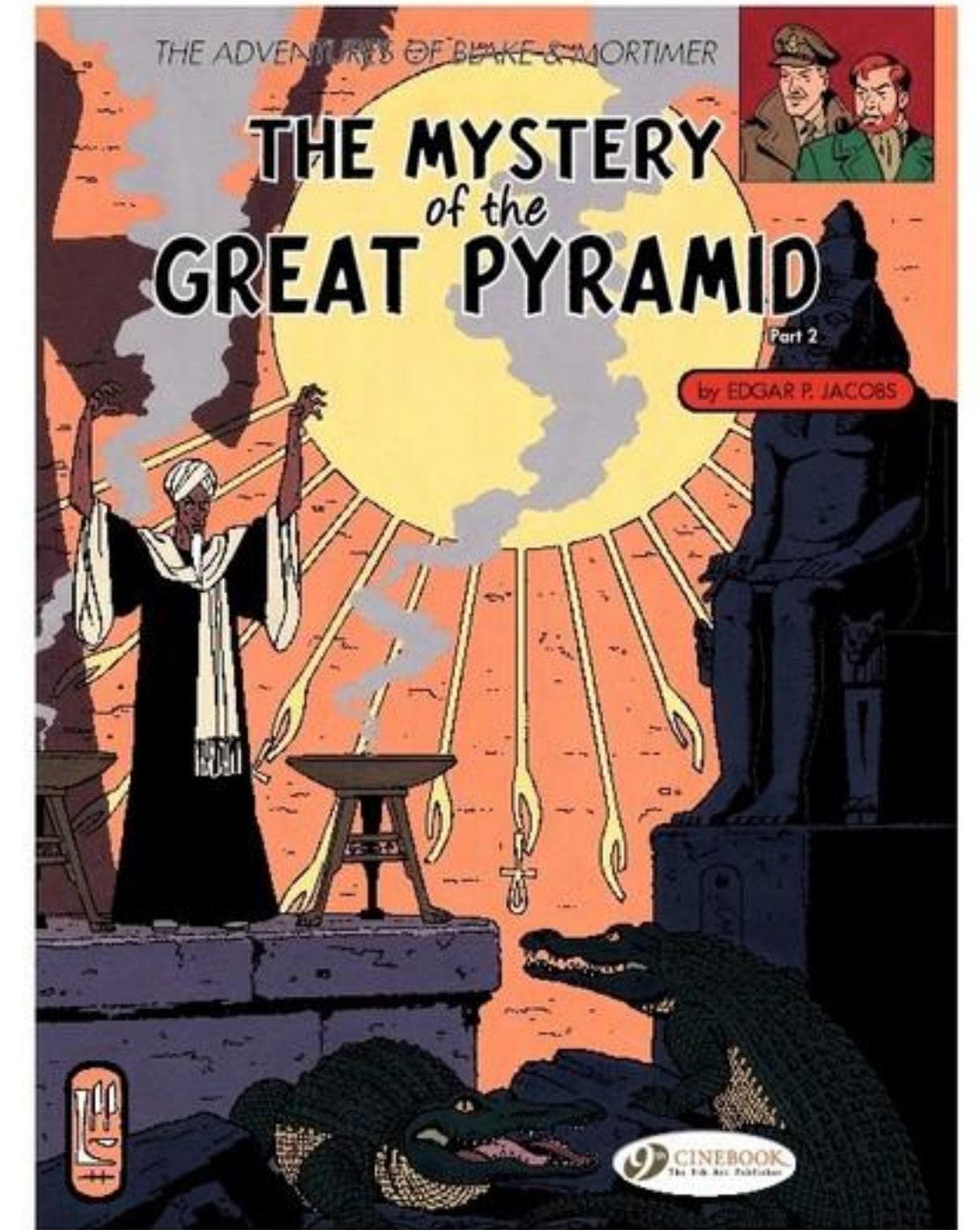
THE ADVENTURES OF BLAKE & MORTIMER



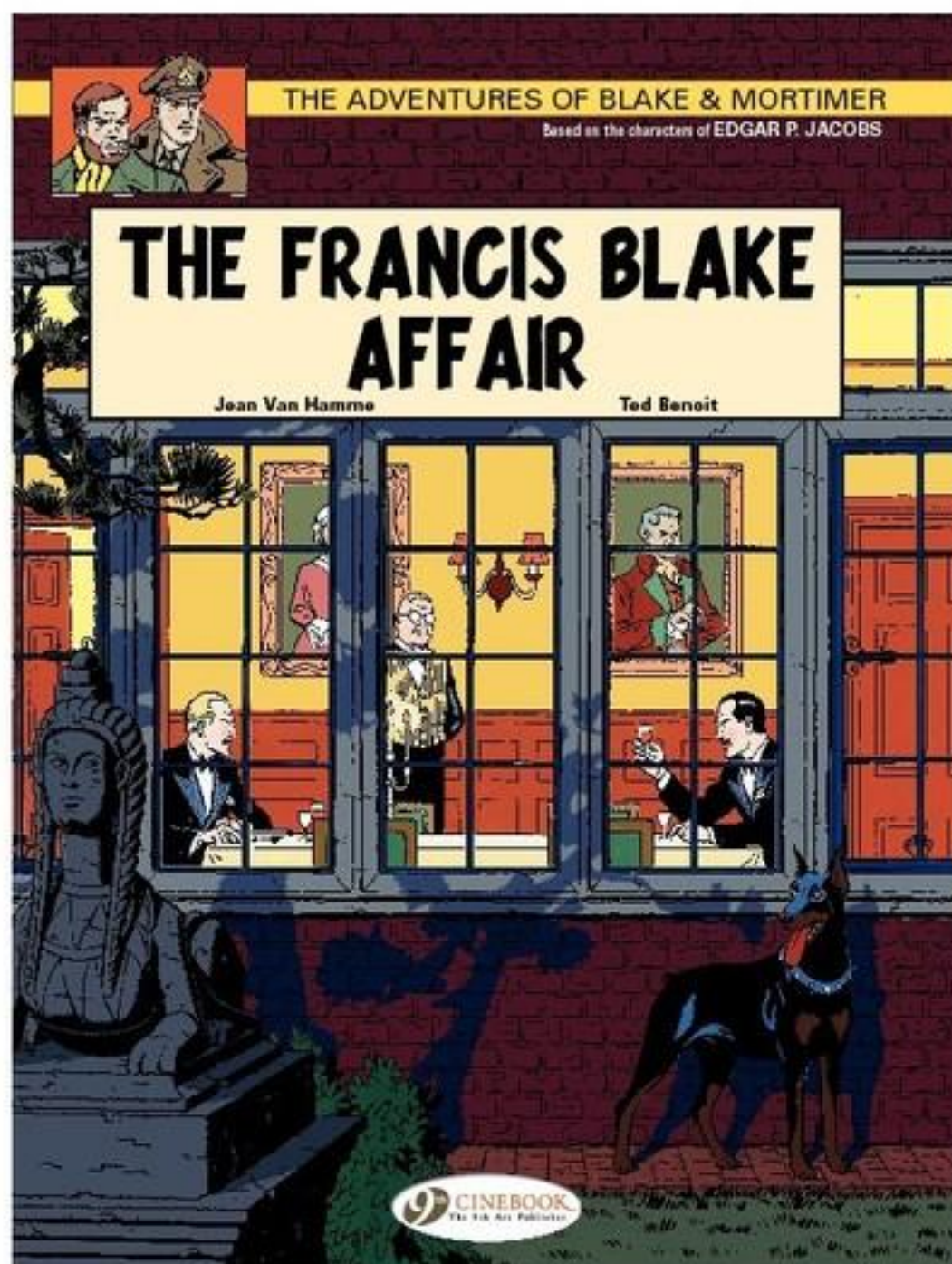
1 The Yellow "M"
EDGAR P. JACOBS



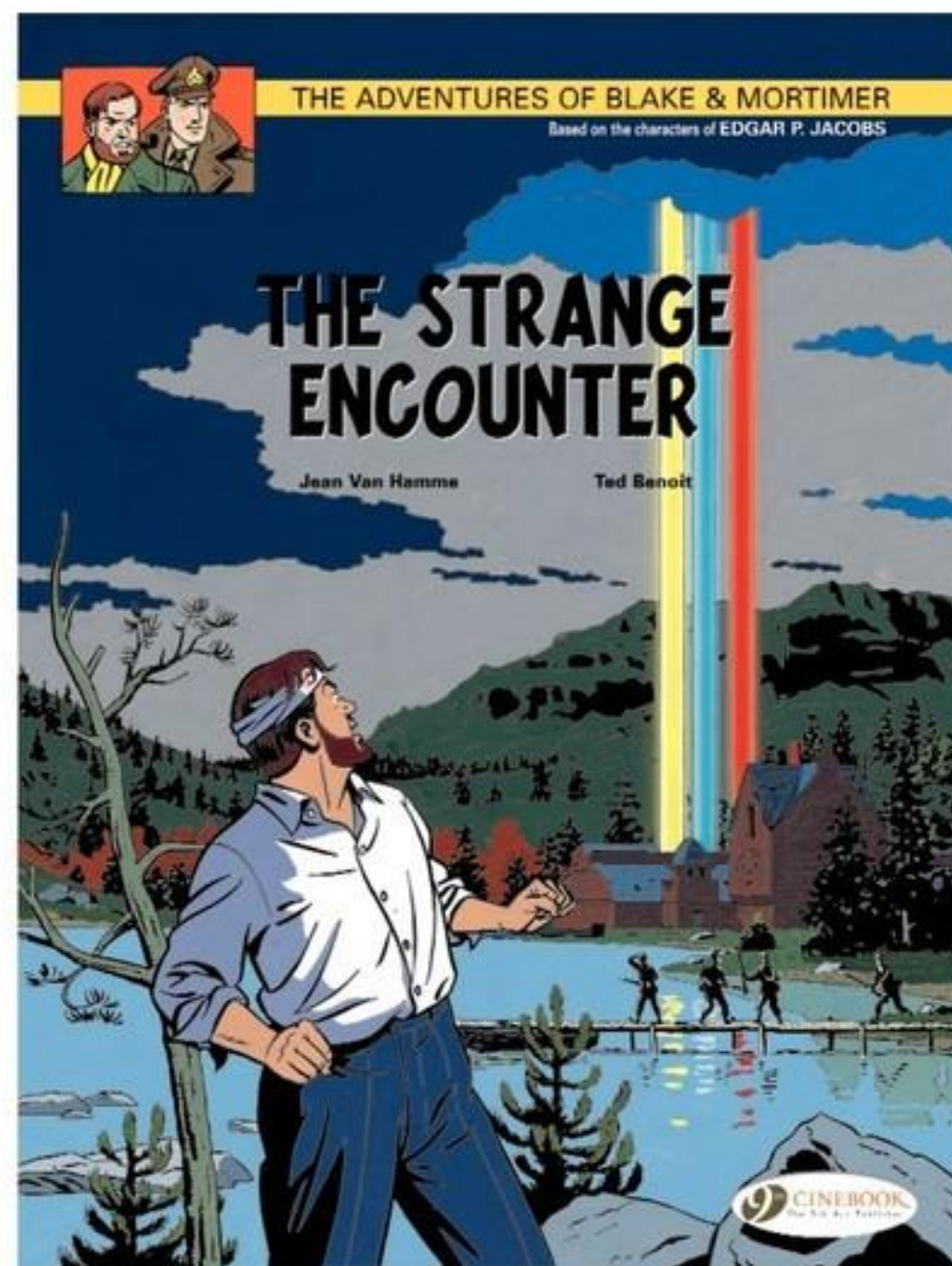
2 The Mystery of the
Great Pyramid Part 1
EDGAR P. JACOBS



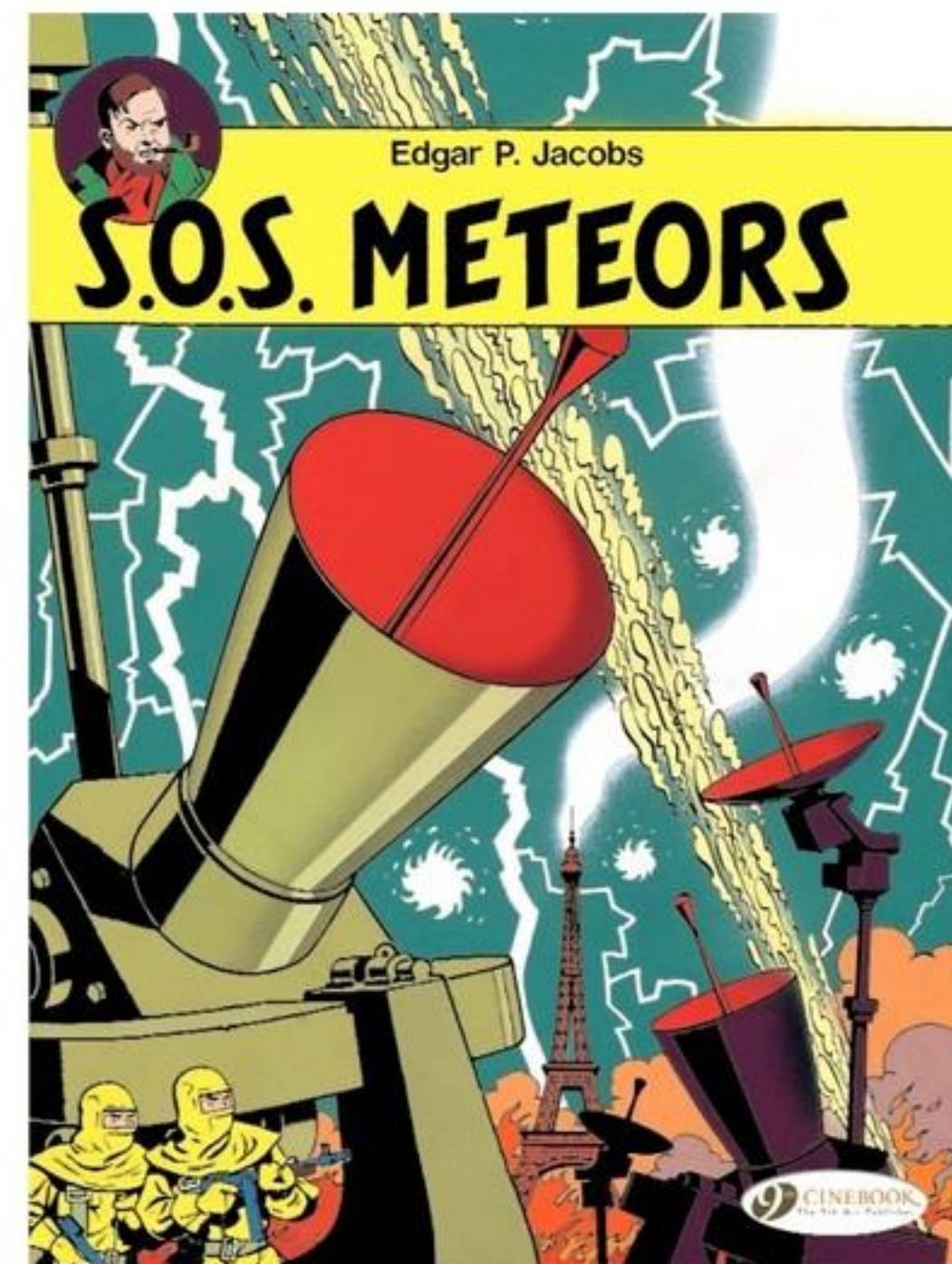
3 The Mystery of the
Great Pyramid Part 2
EDGAR P. JACOBS



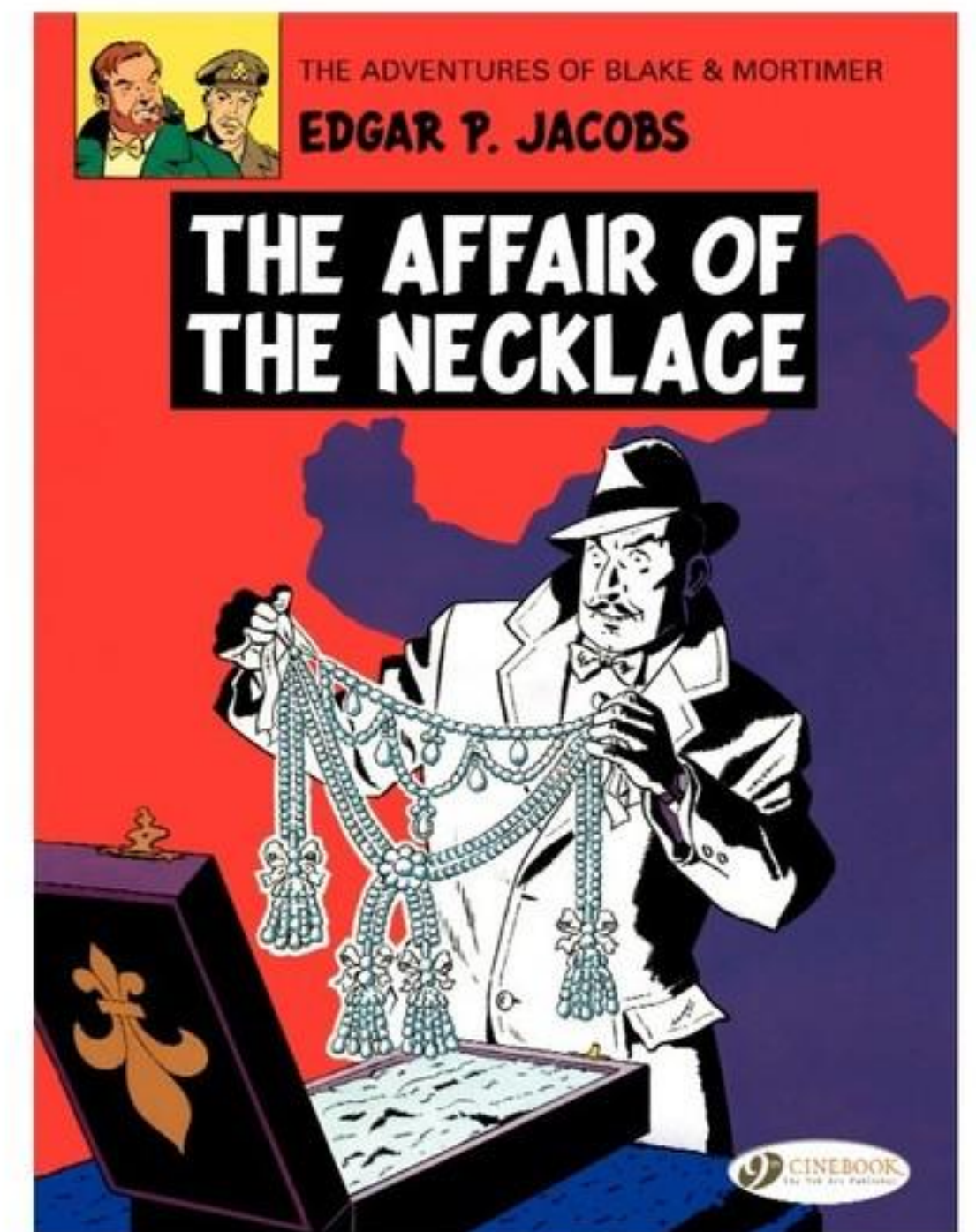
4 The Francis Blake Affair
VAN HAMME - BENOIT



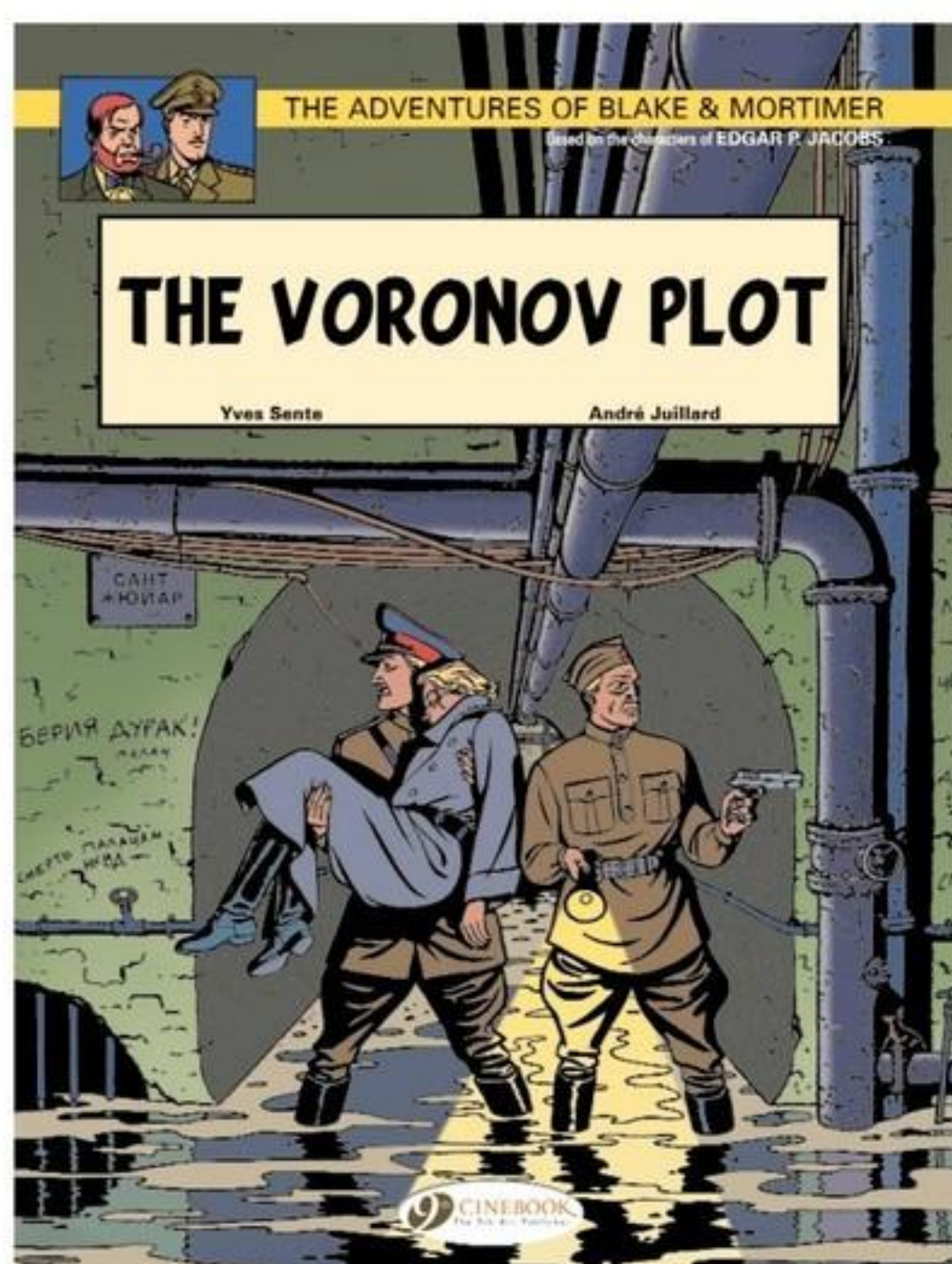
5 The Strange Encounter
VAN HAMME - BENOIT



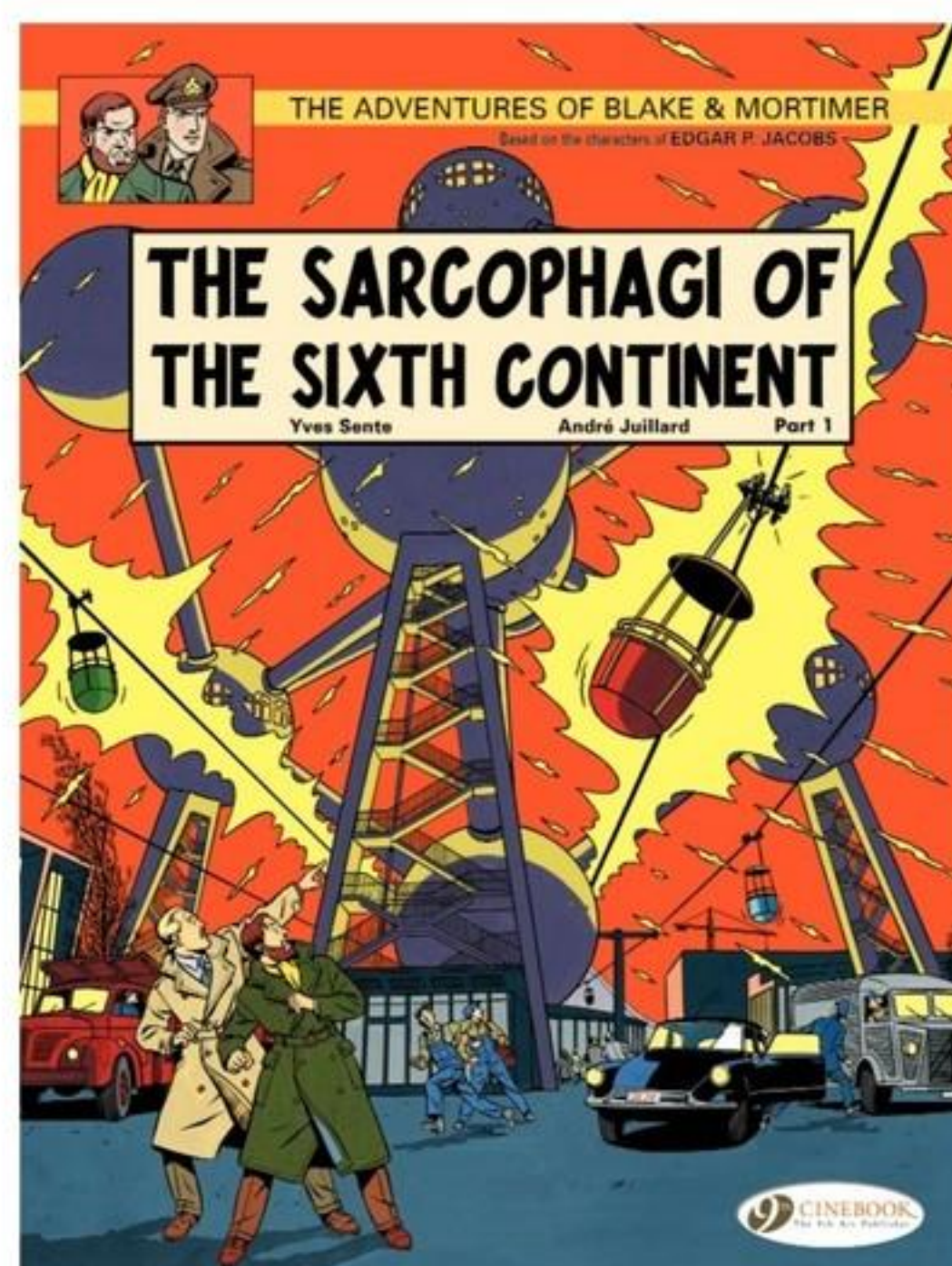
6 S.O.S. Meteors
EDGAR P. JACOBS



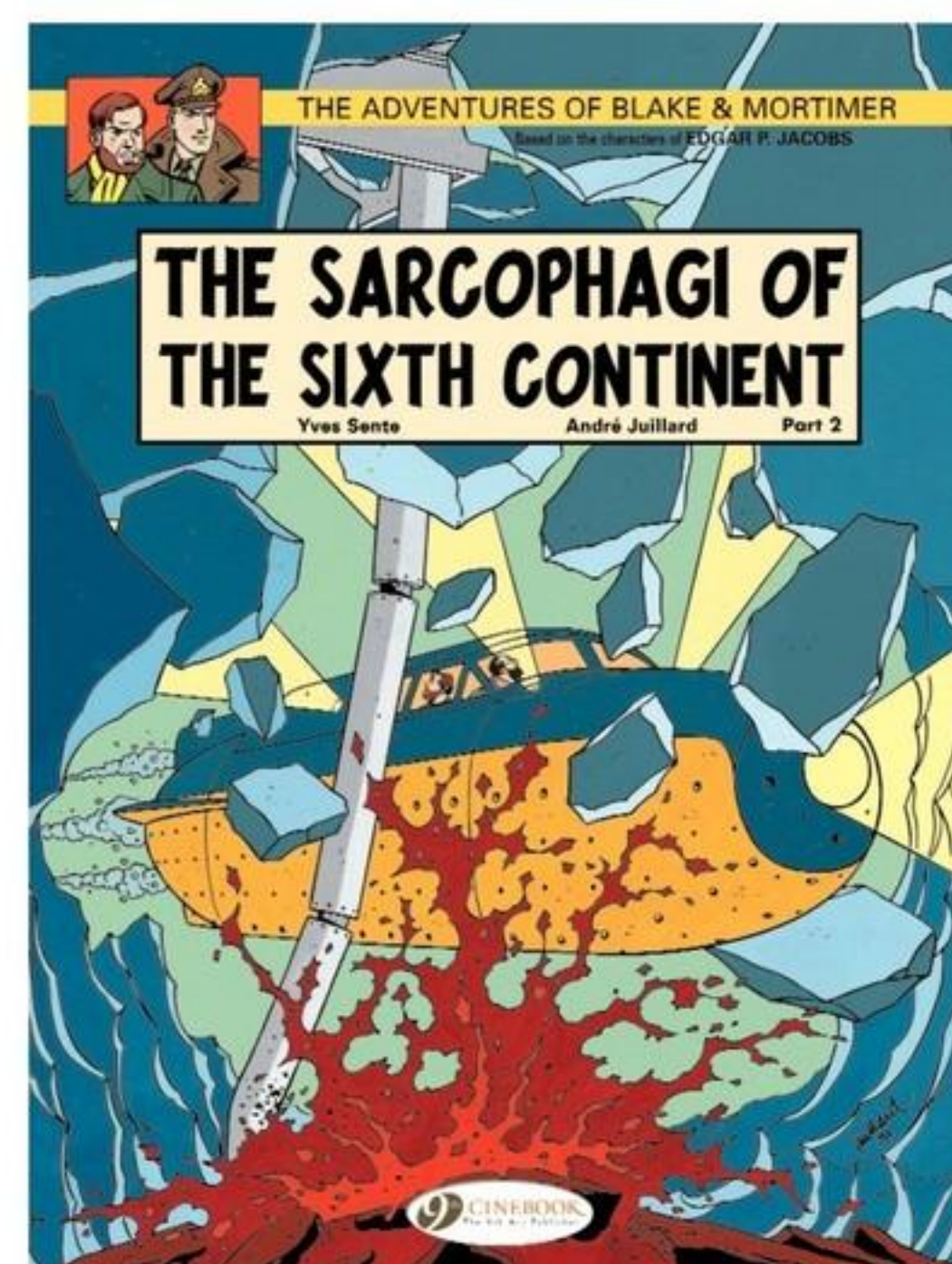
7 The Affair of the Necklace
EDGAR P. JACOBS



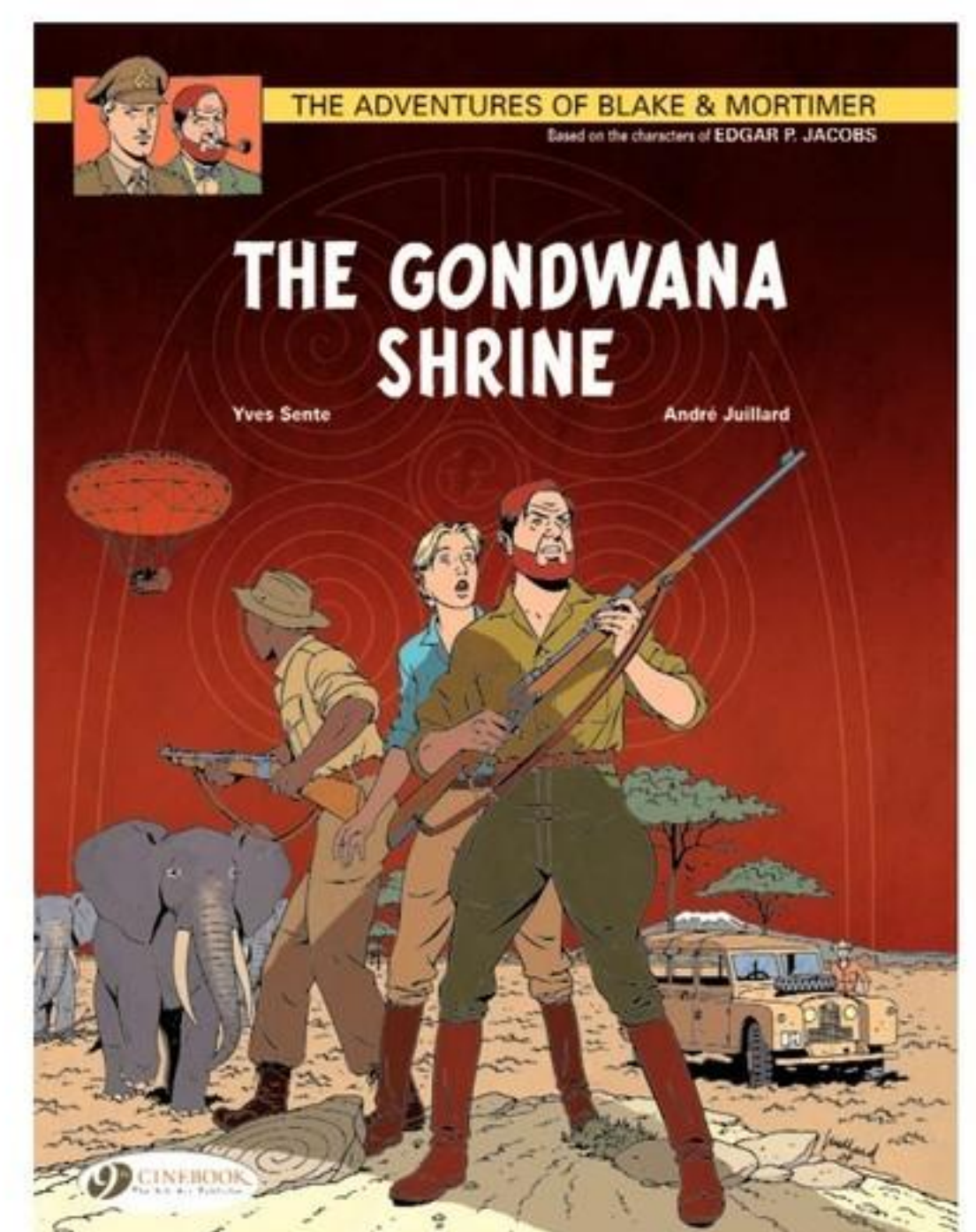
8 The Voronov Plot
SENTE - JUILLARD



9 The Sarcophagi of
the Sixth Continent Part 1
SENTE - JUILLARD



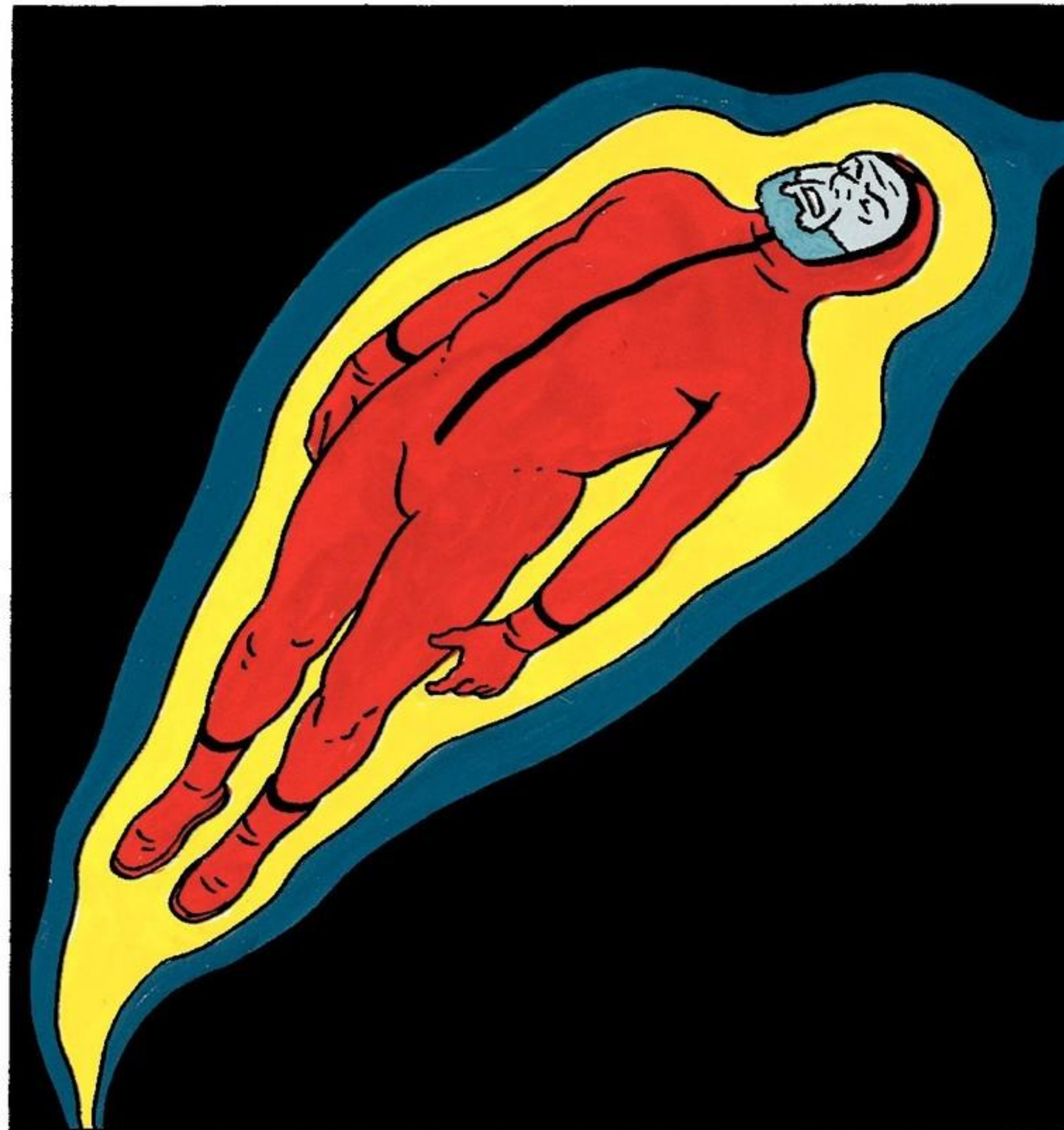
10 The Sarcophagi of
the Sixth Continent Part 2
SENTE - JUILLARD



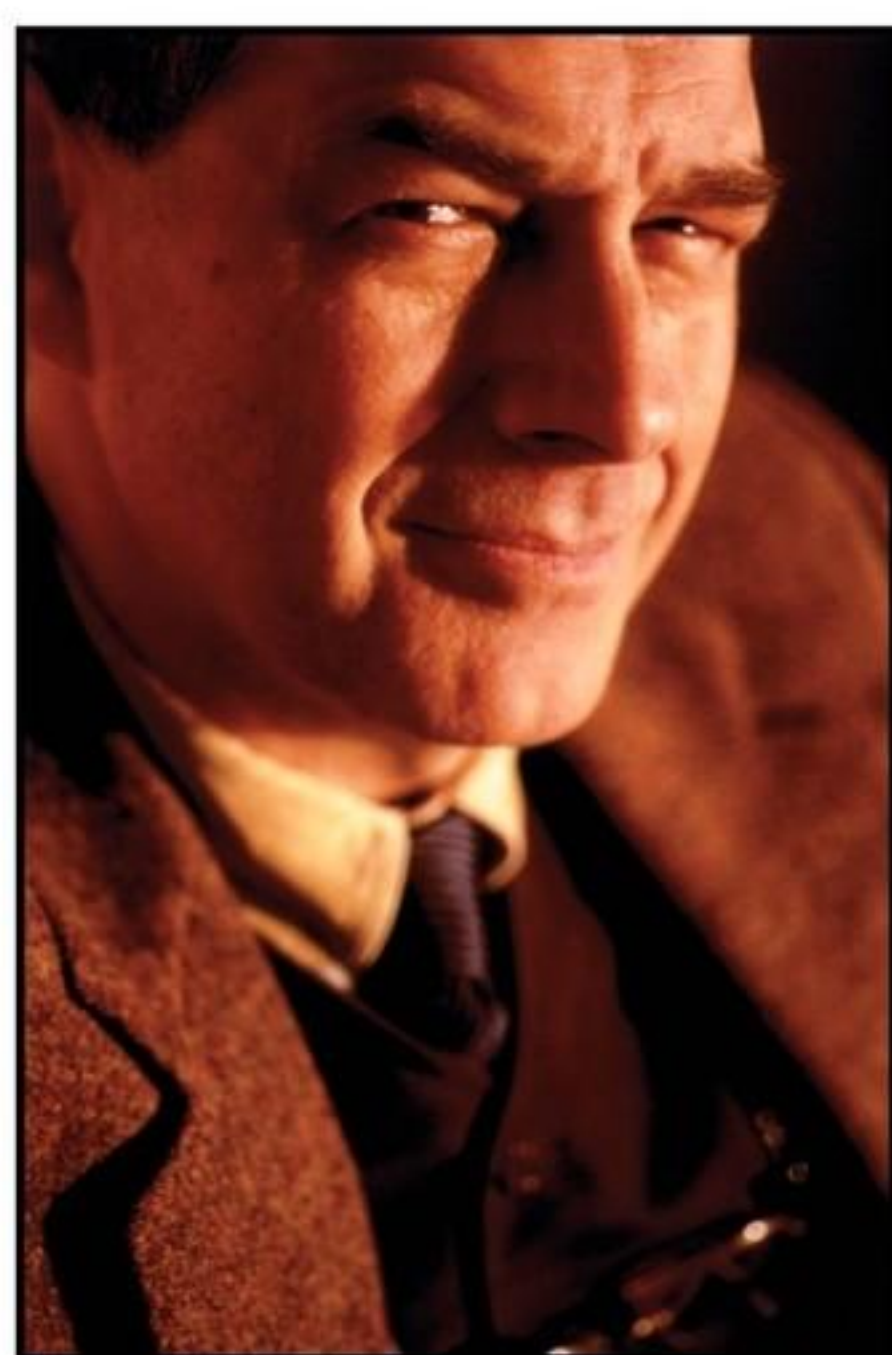
11 The Gondwana Shrine
SENTE - JUILLARD

**TO THE ICE FIELDS OF ANTARCTICA, FOR KING AND
COUNTRY—AND FOR THE PEACE OF THE WESTERN WORLD.**

© Editions Blake & Mortimer / Studio Jacobs (Dargaud-Lombard s.a.) - E.P. Jacobs



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ANDRÉ JUILLARD

THE SARCOPHAGI OF THE SIXTH CONTINENT - Part 2

APRIL 2011

**TRANSLATED
FOR THE FIRST TIME INTO ENGLISH**

PUBLISHED BY



YVES SENTE



THE ADVENTURES OF BLAKE & MORTIMER

Based on the characters of EDGAR P. JACOBS

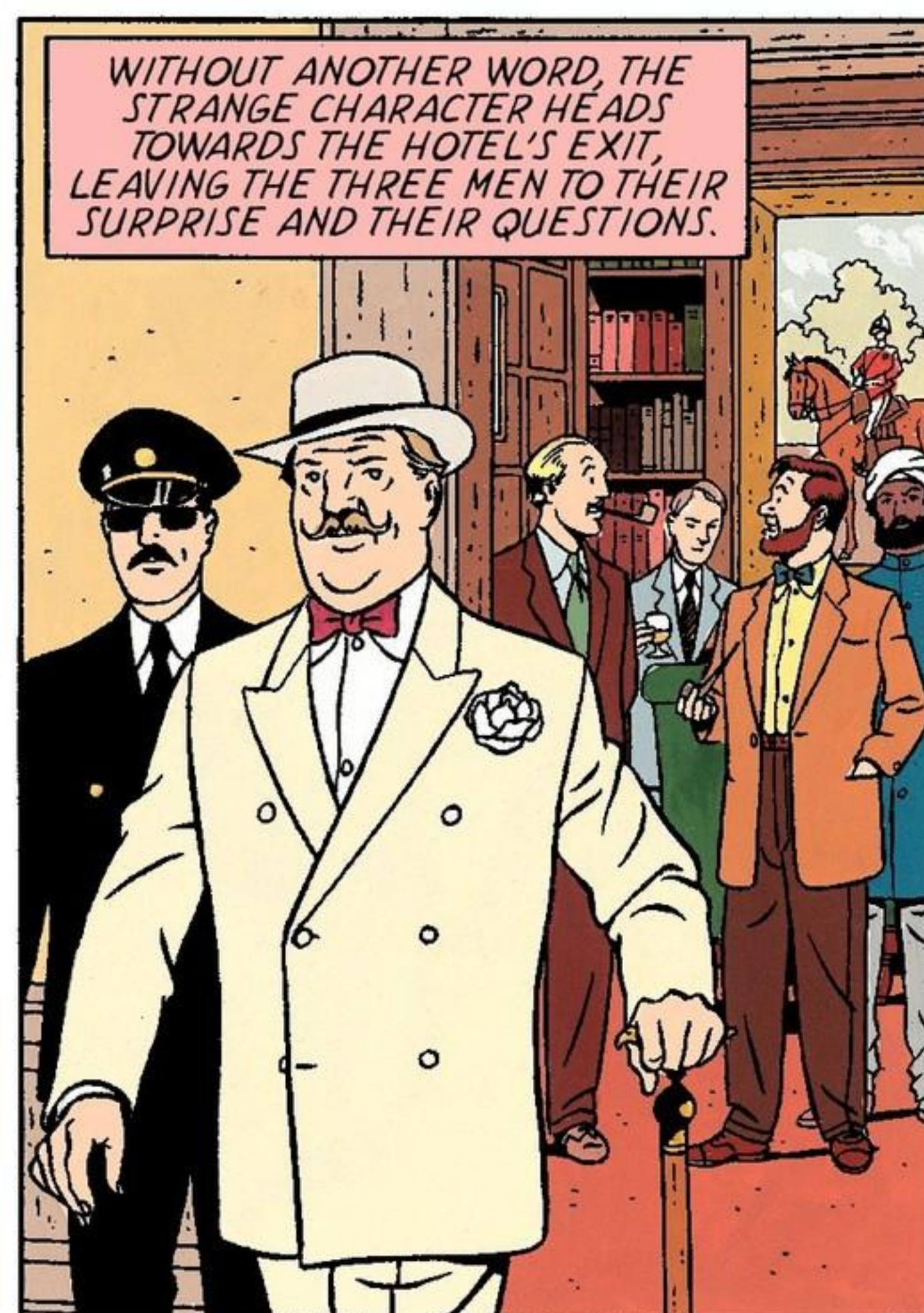
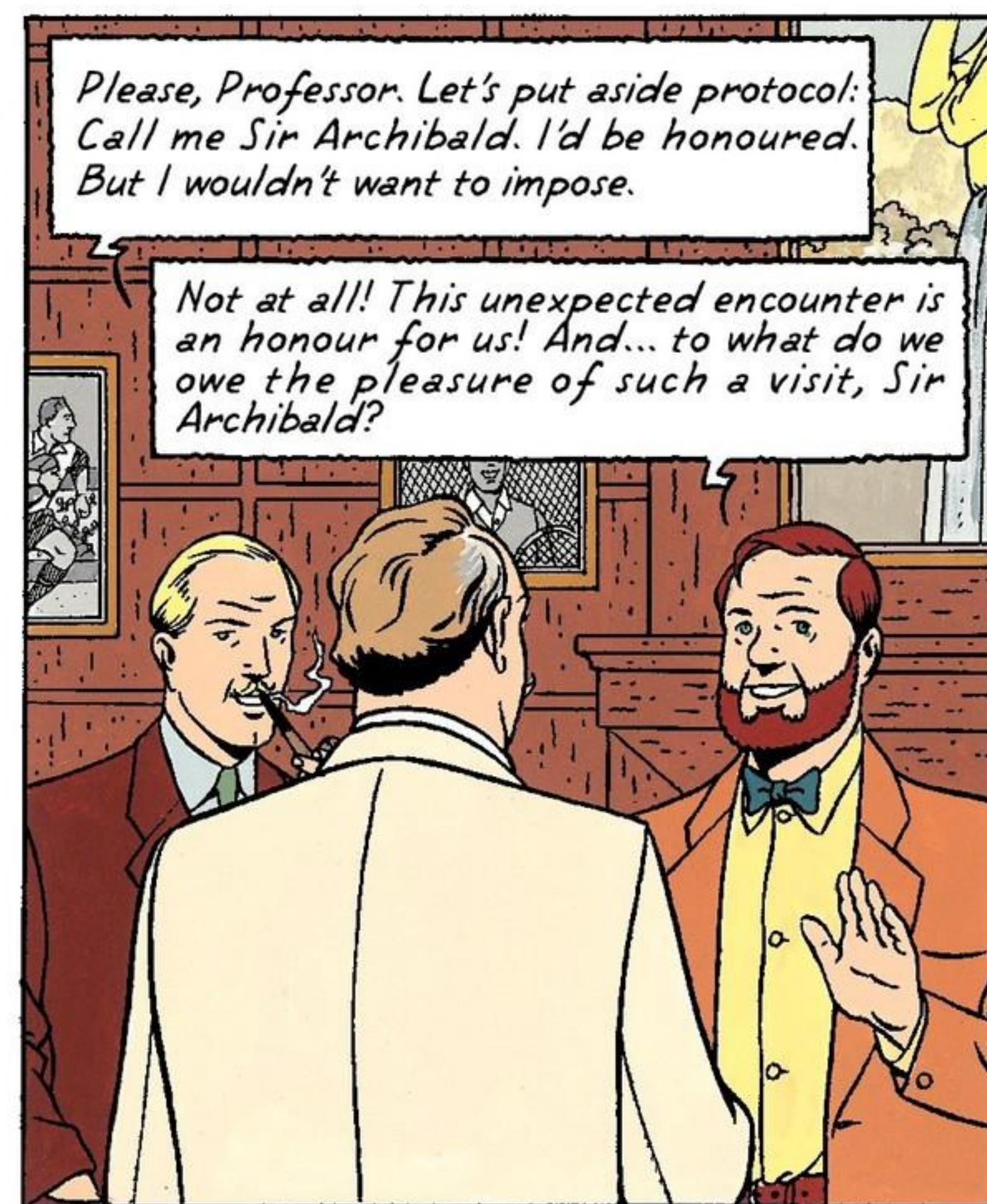
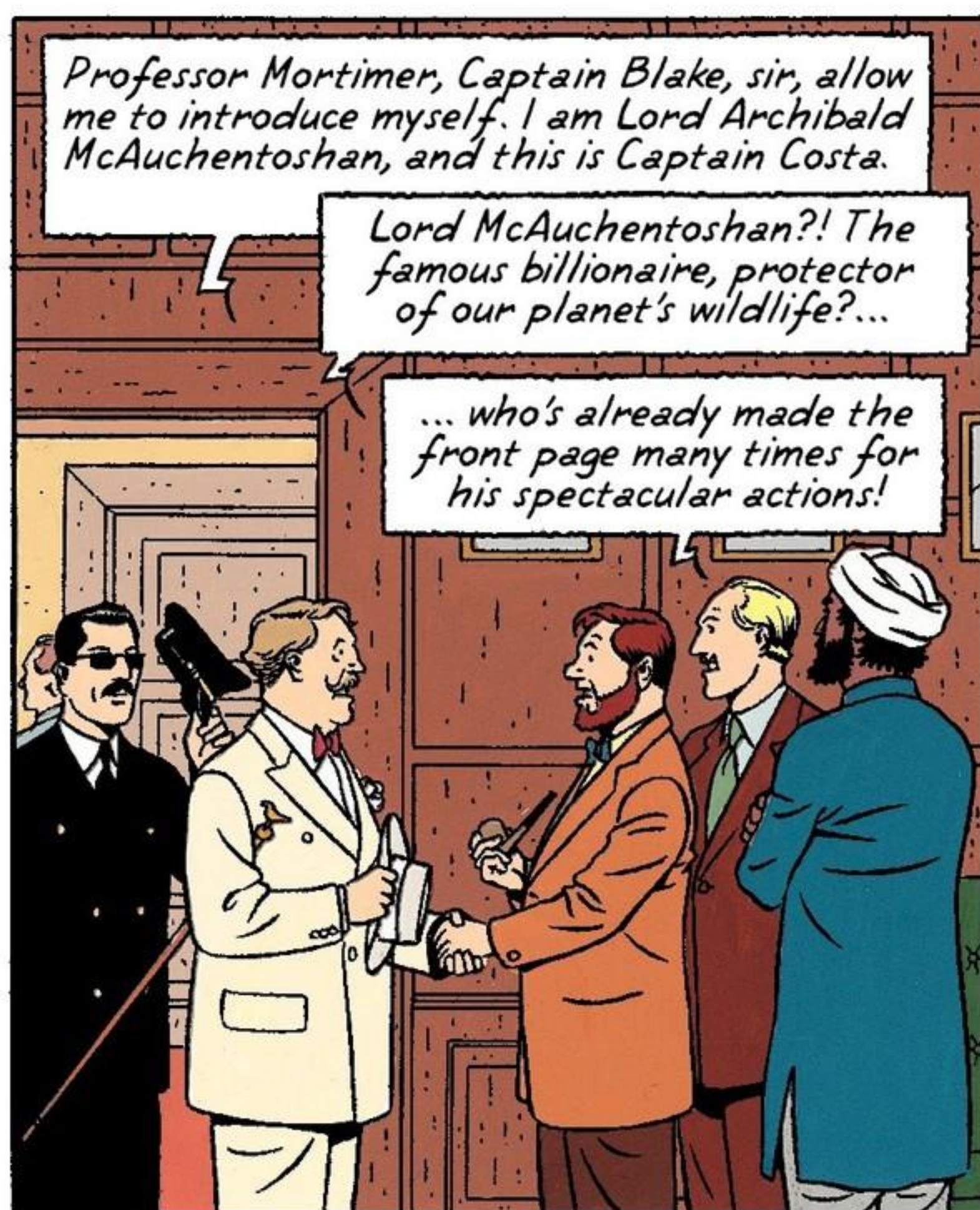
THE SARCOPHAGI OF THE SIXTH CONTINENT

Yves Sente

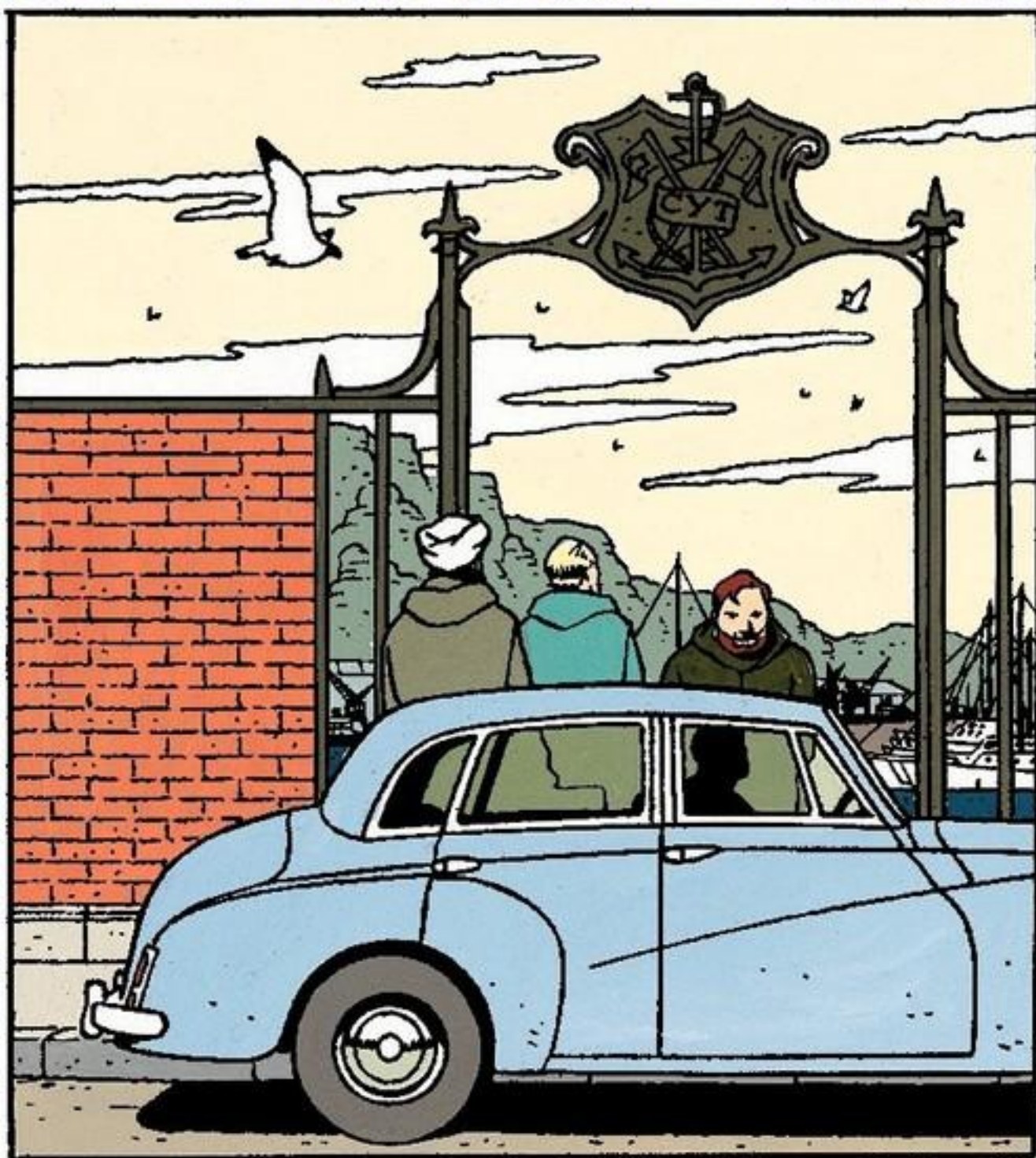
André Juillard

Part 2





THE NEXT MORNING, A TAXI DROPS BLAKE, MORTIMER AND NASIR OFF IN FRONT OF THE YACHT CLUB'S ENTRANCE AT THE TIME GIVEN BY SIR ARCHIBALD.



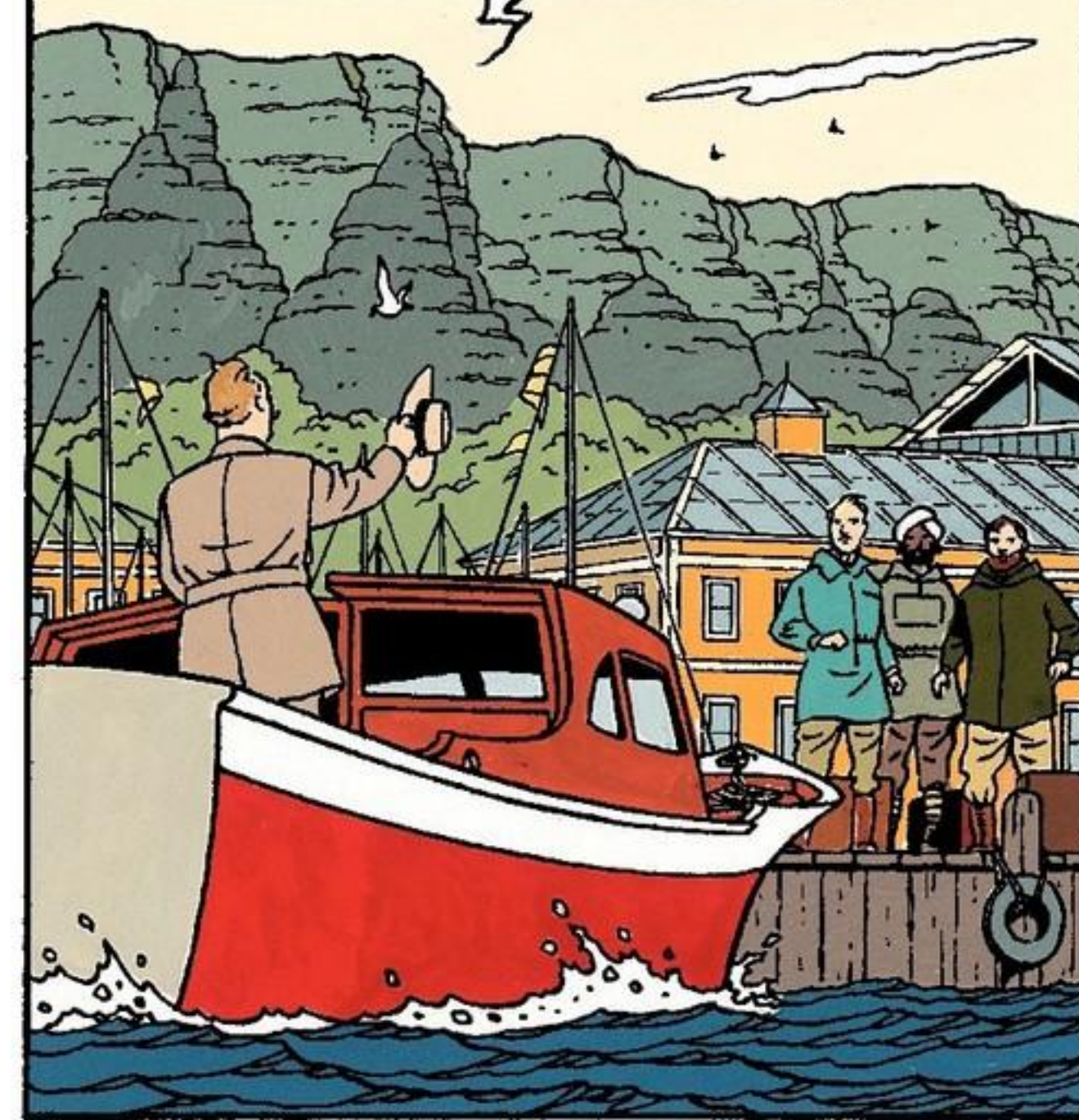
What?!... I don't see any ships suitable for ocean-going here!

Indeed! Could this strange billionaire have wanted to play a trick on us? I was once given the opportunity to read an M15 report on his eccentricities, and believe me, he...

Good day to you, gentlemen!...



If you would be so kind as to climb aboard this launch, you shall see that I do, indeed, have a craft able to brave the open ocean...



... but it's actually an aircraft!



SHORTLY AFTERWARDS, SIR ARCHIBALD'S GUESTS ARE BOARDING THE IMPRESSIVE SEAPLANE.

It's a Blohm & Voss 1 "borrowed" from the Germans during a commando raid in Norway, towards the end of 1943.

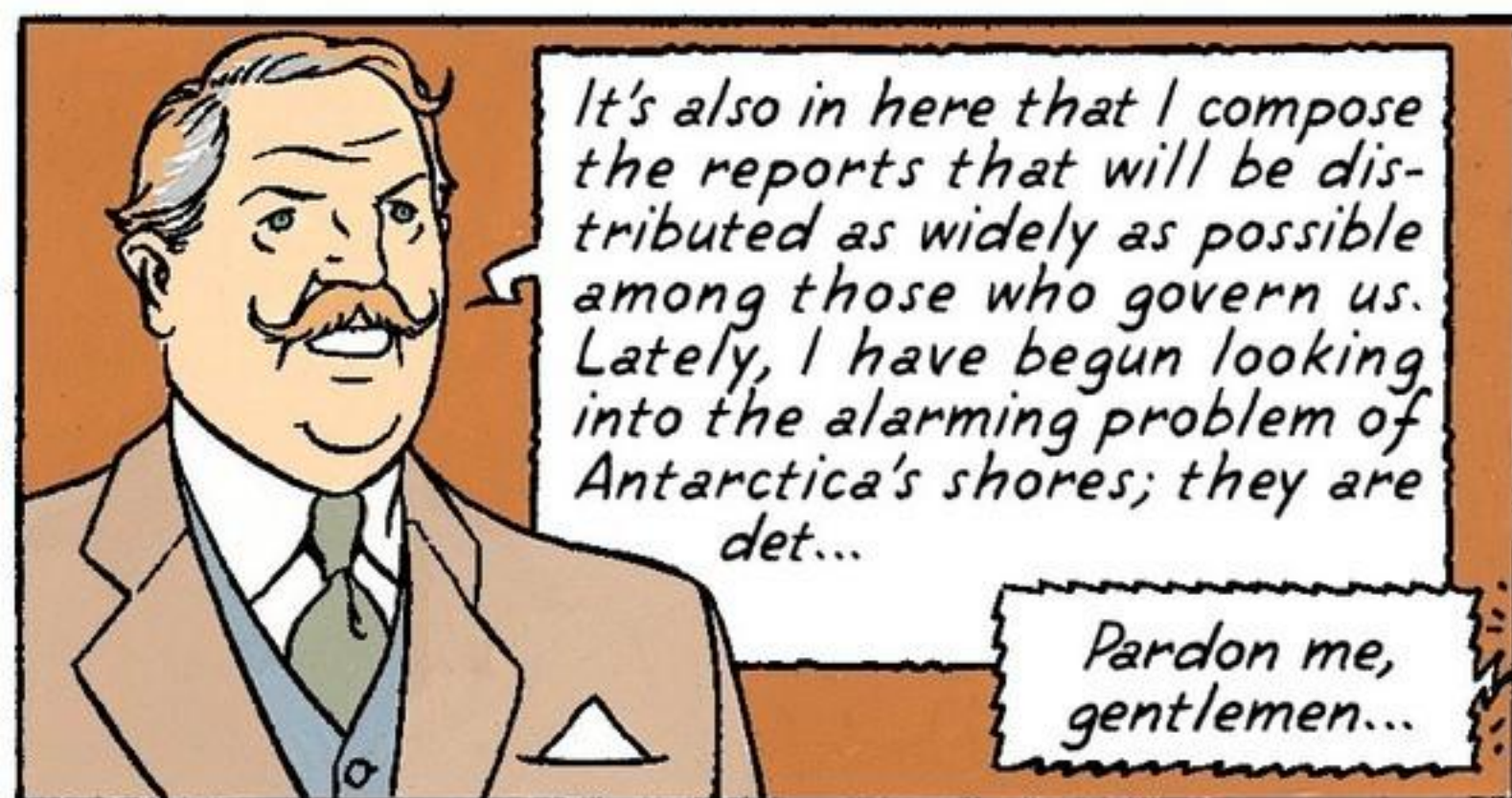


Welcome aboard the Flying Yacht, gentlemen! It's from in here that I survey the areas of the world where man puts nature in the gravest danger.



It's also in here that I compose the reports that will be distributed as widely as possible among those who govern us. Lately, I have begun looking into the alarming problem of Antarctica's shores; they are det...

Pardon me, gentlemen...



... a radio emitter or beacon?

Oh... I think that might be l... I have a small, new type of emitter.* I must have turned it on in my pocket by mistake...



There, it's off.

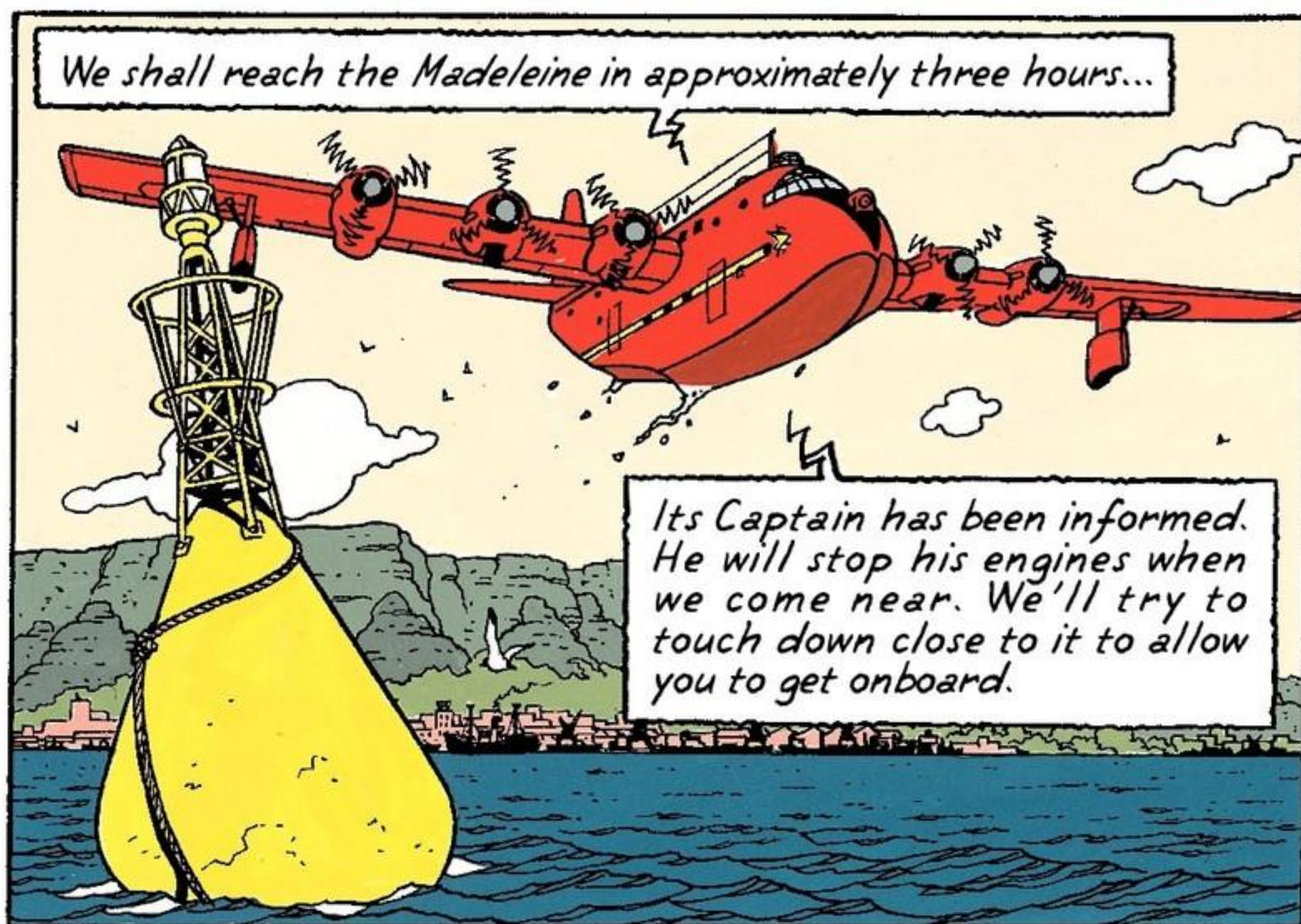
Good. With this problem solved, I invite you to take your seats for take-off.



We have just started the engines, and we've noted some interference on our onboard radar. Might one of you have turned on...



We shall reach the Madeleine in approximately three hours...



Its Captain has been informed. He will stop his engines when we come near. We'll try to touch down close to it to allow you to get onboard.

*SEE THE FIRST VOLUME OF THIS STORY.

THE VORONOV PLOT

Yves Sente

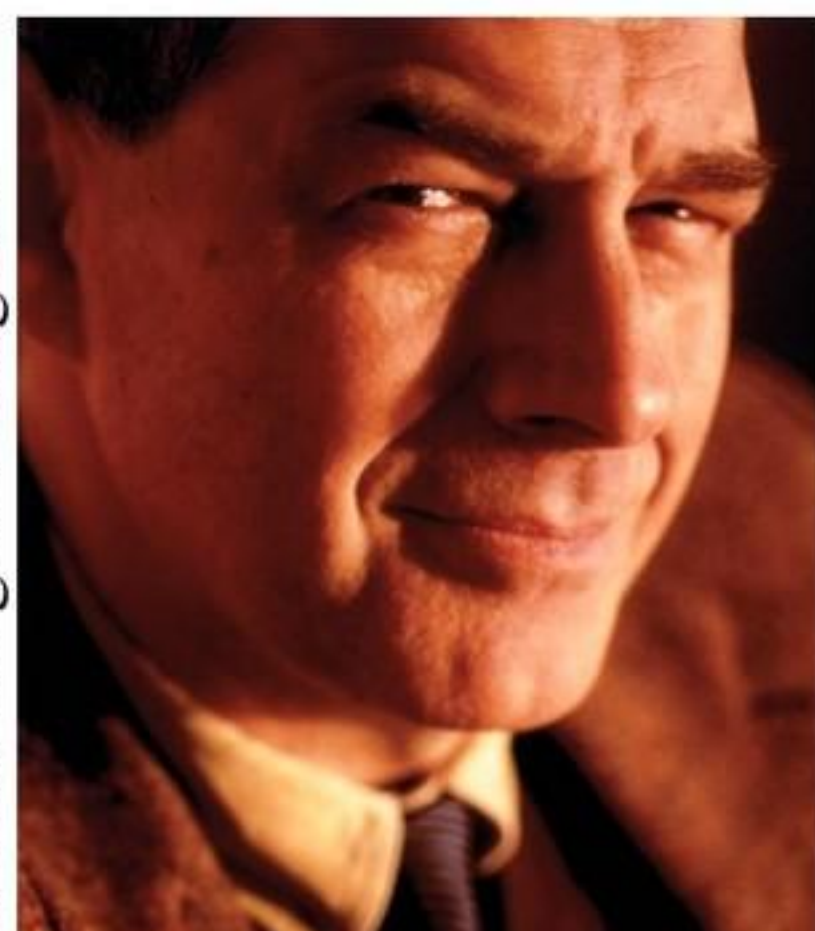
André Juillard

Based on the characters of **EDGAR P. JACOBS**



© Editions Blake & Mortimer / Studio Jacobs (Dargaud-Lombard s.a.) - E.P. Jacobs

A Soviet rocket falls back to Earth carrying deadly bacteria. KGB Professor Voronov turns the extraterrestrial threat into a terrifying weapon that could be used to devastate the Western world—but he doesn't take into account the vigilance of Her Majesty's intelligence services. Soon, Blake and Mortimer are drawn into a lethal, shadowy war, from Moscow to London, where the stakes are no less than international peace and the real enemy may not be so obvious.



© Rita Scaglia / Dargaud

André Juillard is a celebrated artist with a career spanning more than 35 years. He has worked on famous series such as "Les Sept Vies de L'Épervier" and "Masquerouge." In 1996, he was awarded the Grand Prix at the Angoulême festival.

Yves Sente began writing scripts in 1999. He has already acquired considerable clout, being chosen as successor to **Jean Van Hamme** for the series "Thorgal" and the sequel to "XIII", and working with **Jean Van Hamme** on "Blake & Mortimer."



© E. Charneux / Dargaud

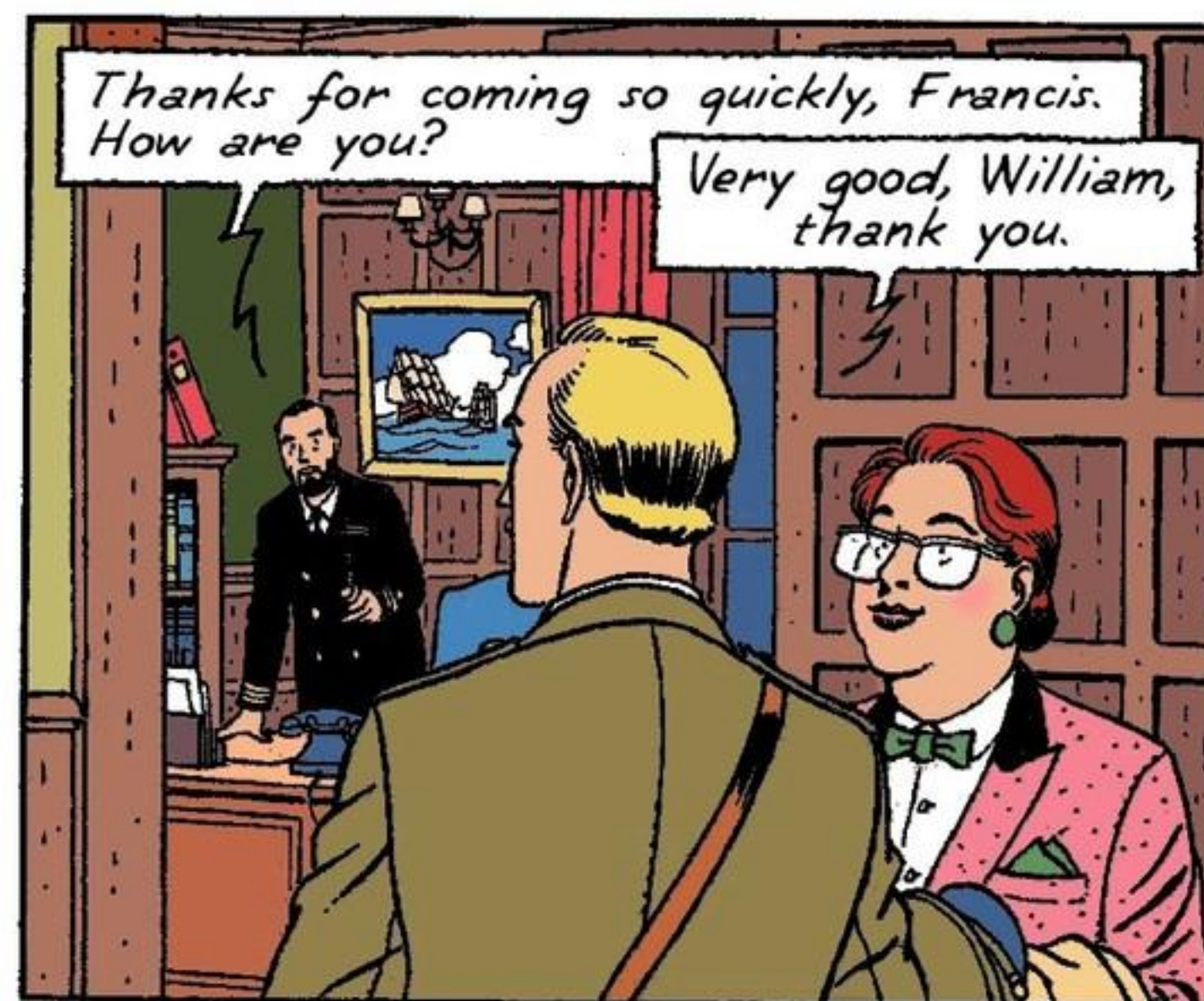


LONDON, THE EVENING
OF MARCH THE 25TH

AROUND 6 PM, CAPTAIN FRANCIS BLAKE,
CHIEF OF M15—THE FAMOUS BRITISH
COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE SERVICE—PRESENTS
HIMSELF TO THE SECRETARY OF HIS
EXTERNAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE
COLLEAGUE, COMMANDER WILLIAM
STEELE OF M16.

Good evening, Miss Pound. I'm here to
meet with the
Commander.

We were expecting
you, Captain. Please
follow me.

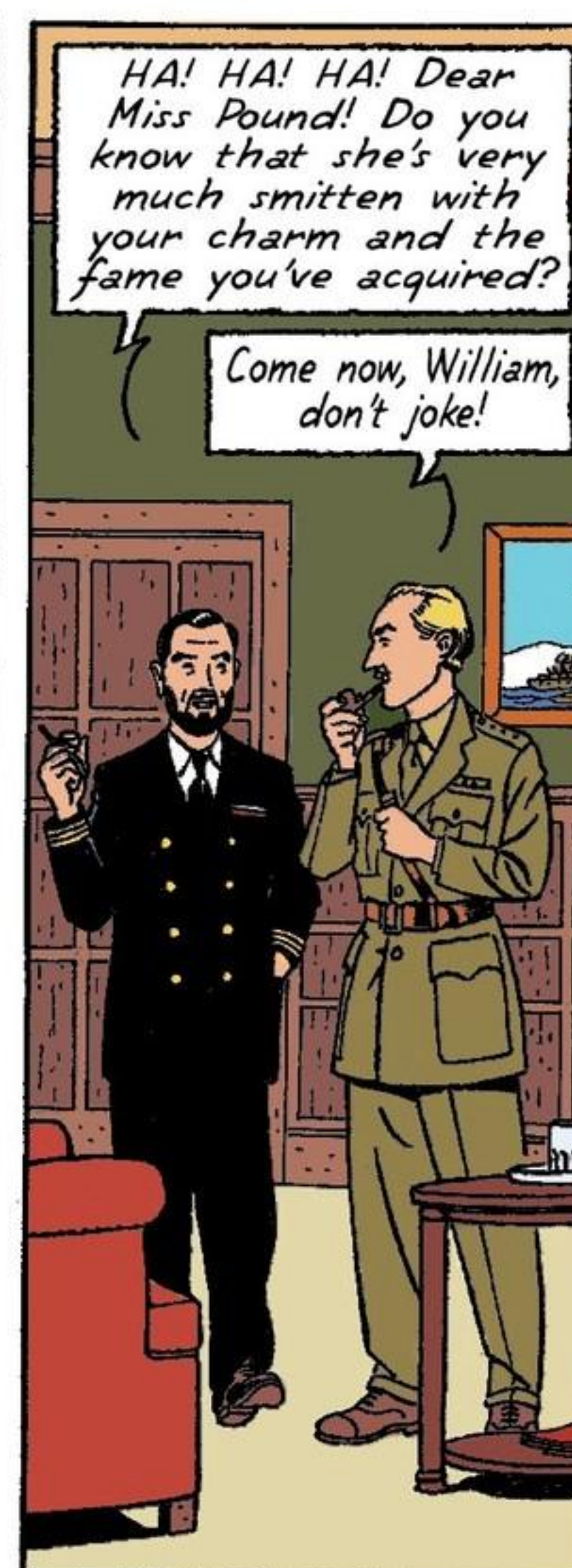


Thanks for coming so quickly, Francis.
How are you?

Very good, William,
thank you.

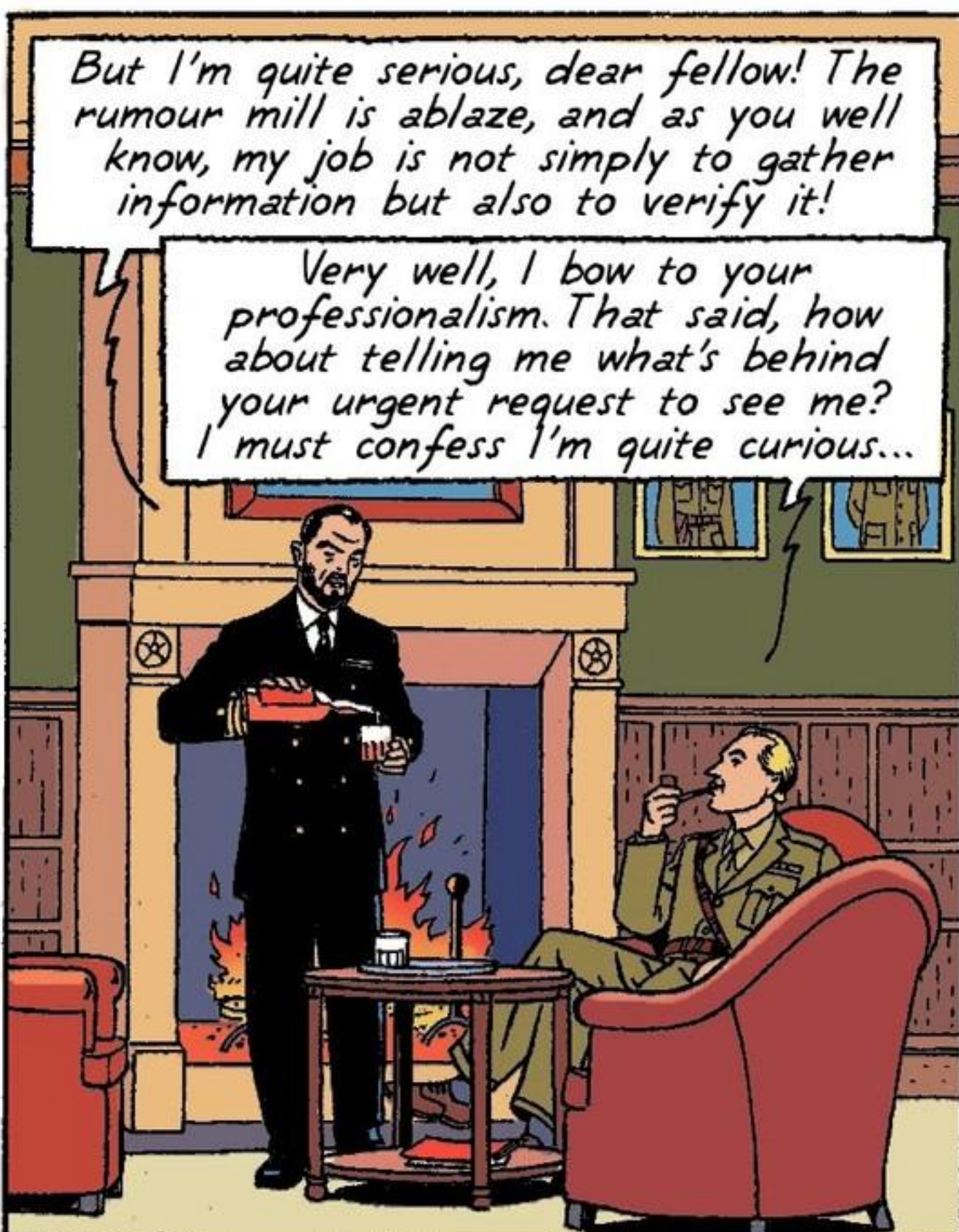


Thank you, Miss Pound.
You may leave us now.



HA! HA! HA! Dear
Miss Pound! Do you
know that she's very
much smitten with
your charm and the
fame you've acquired?

Come now, William,
don't joke!



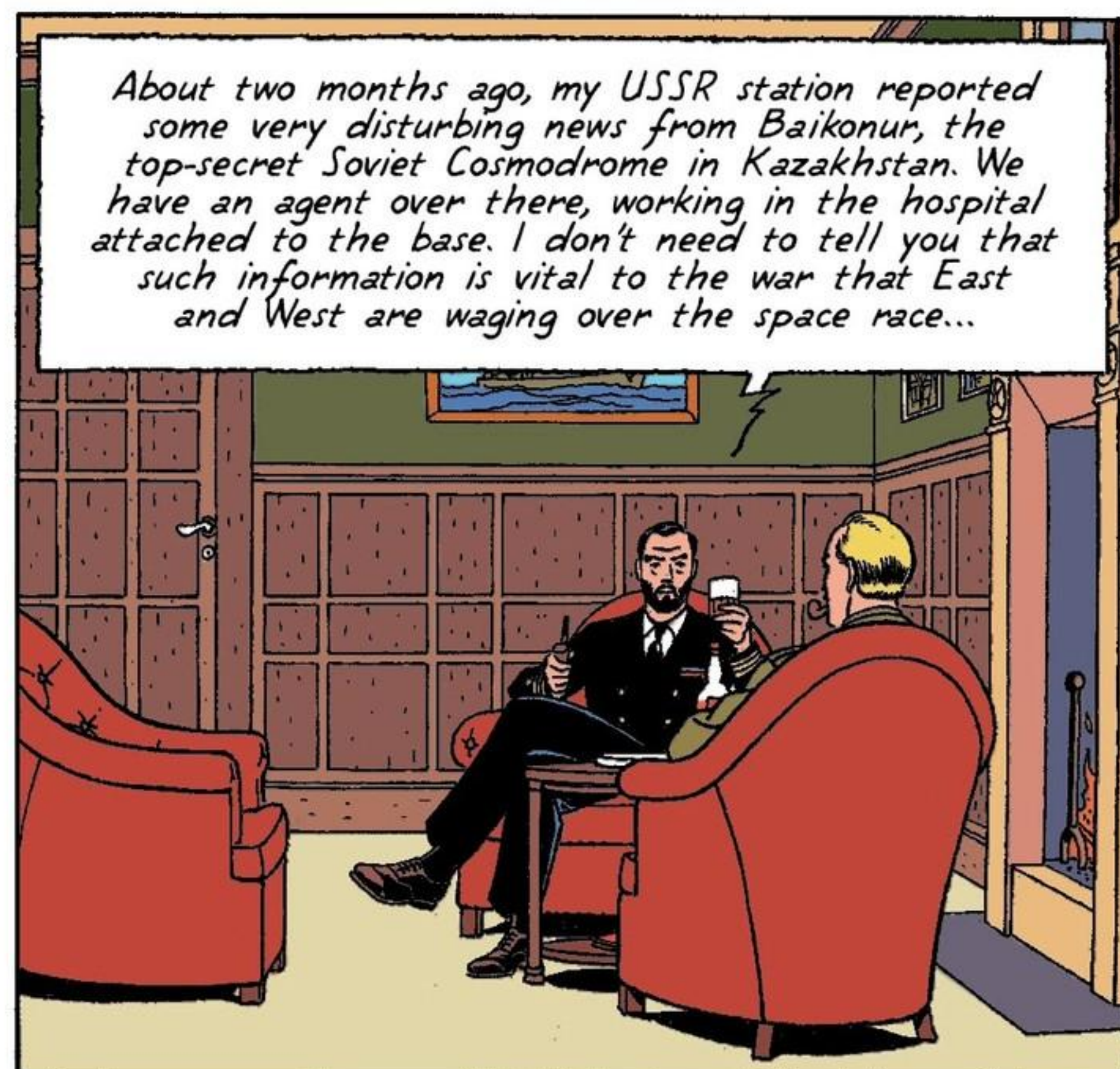
But I'm quite serious, dear fellow! The
rumour mill is ablaze, and as you well
know, my job is not simply to gather
information but also to verify it!

Very well, I bow to your
professionalism. That said, how
about telling me what's behind
your urgent request to see me?
I must confess I'm quite curious...

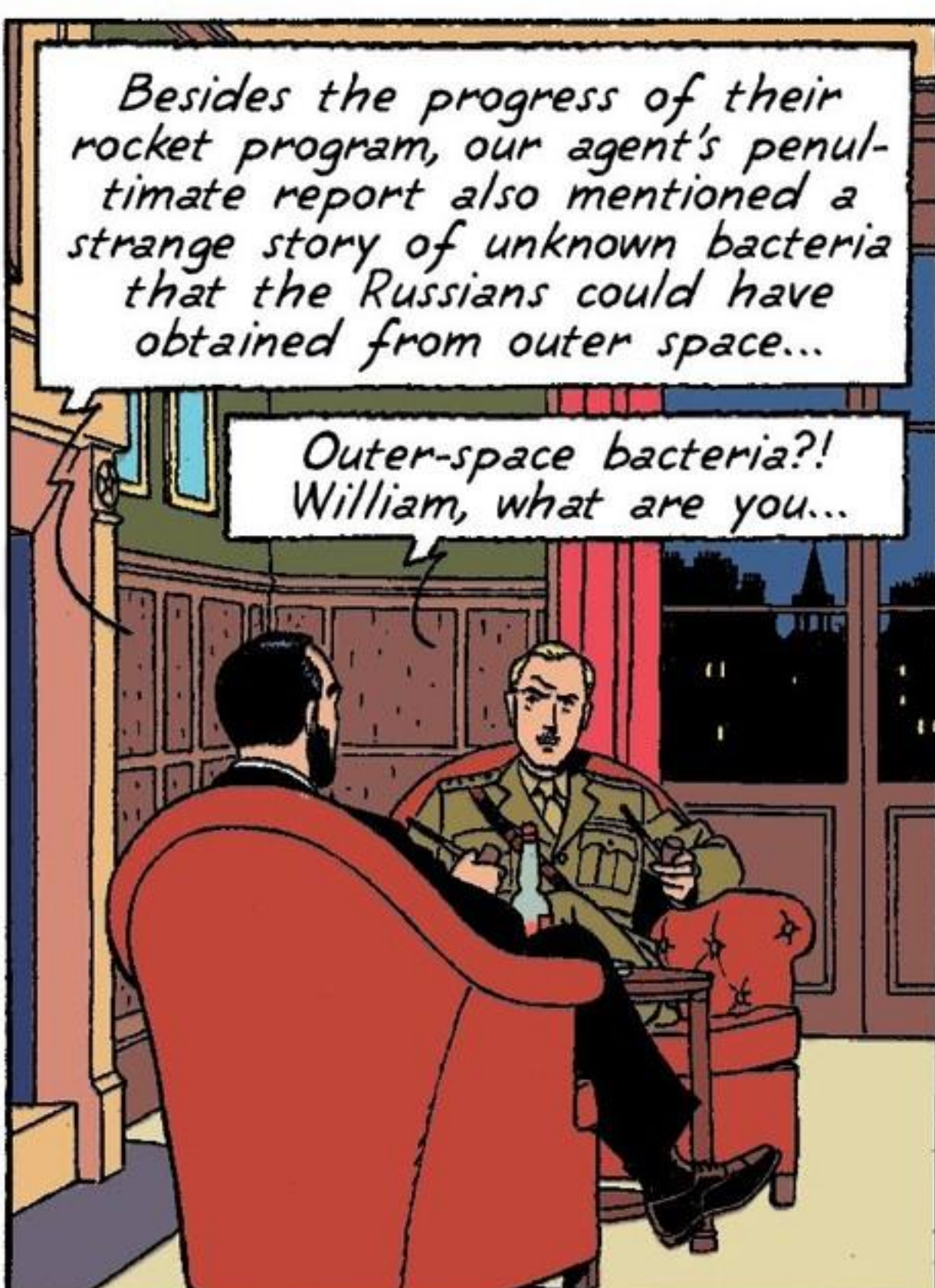


All right! Let's dispense with
the pleasantries. Francis,
I have some serious trouble
with the Soviet Union.

I'm listening, old boy.



About two months ago, my USSR station reported
some very disturbing news from Baikonur, the
top-secret Soviet Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. We
have an agent over there, working in the hospital
attached to the base. I don't need to tell you that
such information is vital to the war that East
and West are waging over the space race...



Besides the progress of their
rocket program, our agent's penul-
timate report also mentioned a
strange story of unknown bacteria
that the Russians could have
obtained from outer space...

Outer-space bacteria?!
William, what are you...



KNOCK
KNOCK

Come in!

Pardon me, sir, but I have a message
from MOS ONE, and you asked me
to use the emergency protocol if...

Yes, I know! Bring it here.



The blazes!
Another one!!

Edgard Félix Pierre Jacobs (1904–1987), better known under his pen name Edgar P. Jacobs, was a comic book creator (writer and artist), born in Brussels, Belgium. It has been said of Jacobs that he didn't remember a time when he hadn't drawn.

Jacobs assisted fellow Belgian Hergé (Georges Prosper Remi) in the recasting of Hergé's *Tintin in the Congo*, *Tintin in America*, *King Ottokar's Sceptre* and *The Blue Lotus* for book publication. He also contributed directly to both the drawing and storylines for the Tintin double-albums *The Secret of the Unicorn/Red Rackham's Treasure* and *The Seven Crystal Balls/Prisoners of the Sun*.

When the comics magazine *Tintin* was launched on 26th September 1946, it included Jacobs' story *Le secret de l'Espadon* (*The Secret of the Swordfish*). This story would be the first in the Blake and Mortimer series.

The characters of Captain Francis Blake, dashing head of MI5, his friend Professor Philip Mortimer, a nuclear physicist, and their sworn enemy Colonel Olrik became legendary heroes of the 9th art in the long-running series.

After Jacobs' death in 1987, Bob de Moor completed his unfinished last story. In the mid-1990s, the series was continued by the Jacobs Studios with two teams of writers and artists: Van Hamme/Benoit and Sente/Juillard.



ORIGINAL FRENCH EDITION		
1	1950	Le Secret de l'Espadon, T1
2	1953	Le Secret de l'Espadon, T2
3	1953	Le Secret de l'Espadon, T3
4	1954	Le Mystère de la Grande Pyramide, T1
5	1955	Le Mystère de la Grande Pyramide, T2
6	1956	La Marque Jaune
7	1957	L'Énigme de l'Atlantide
8	1959	S.O.S. Météores
9	1962	Le Piège diabolique
10	1967	L'Affaire du Collier
11	1971	Les trois Formules du Professeur Satō, T1
12	1990	Les trois Formules du Professeur Satō, T2 (Jacobs/De Moor)
13	1996	L'Affaire Francis Blake (Van Hamme/Benoit)
14	2000	La Machination Voronov (Sente/Juillard)
15	2001	L'Étrange Rendez-Vous (Van Hamme/Benoit)
16	2003	Les Sarcophages du Sixième Continent, T1 (Sente/Juillard)
17	2004	Les Sarcophages du Sixième Continent, T2 (Sente/Juillard)
18	2008	Le sanctuaire du Gondwana (Sente/Juillard)
19	2009	La malédiction des 30 deniers, T1 (Van Hamme/Sterne/De Spiegeleer)
20	2010	La malédiction des 30 deniers, T2 (Van Hamme/Aubin)

CINEBOOK EDITION		
		The Secret of the Swordfish, Part 1
		The Secret of the Swordfish, Part 2
		The Secret of the Swordfish, Part 3
2	2007	The Mystery of the Great Pyramid, Part 1
3	2008	The Mystery of the Great Pyramid, Part 2
1	2007	The Yellow "M"
		Atlantis Mystery
6	2009	S.O.S. Meteors
		The Time Trap
7	2010	The Affair of the Necklace
		Professor Satō's Three Formulas, Part 1
		Professor Satō's Three Formulas, Part 2
4	2008	The Francis Blake Affair
8	2010	The Voronov Plot
5	2009	The Strange Encounter
9	2011	The Sarcophagi of the Sixth Continent, Part 1
10	2011	The Sarcophagi of the Sixth Continent, Part 2
11	2011	The Gondwana Shrine
		The Curse of the 30 Pieces of Silver, Part 1
		The Curse of the 30 Pieces of Silver, Part 2



LYNX-EMPIRE